

HOUSE HEALTH  
*by*  
NORMAN BRIDGE



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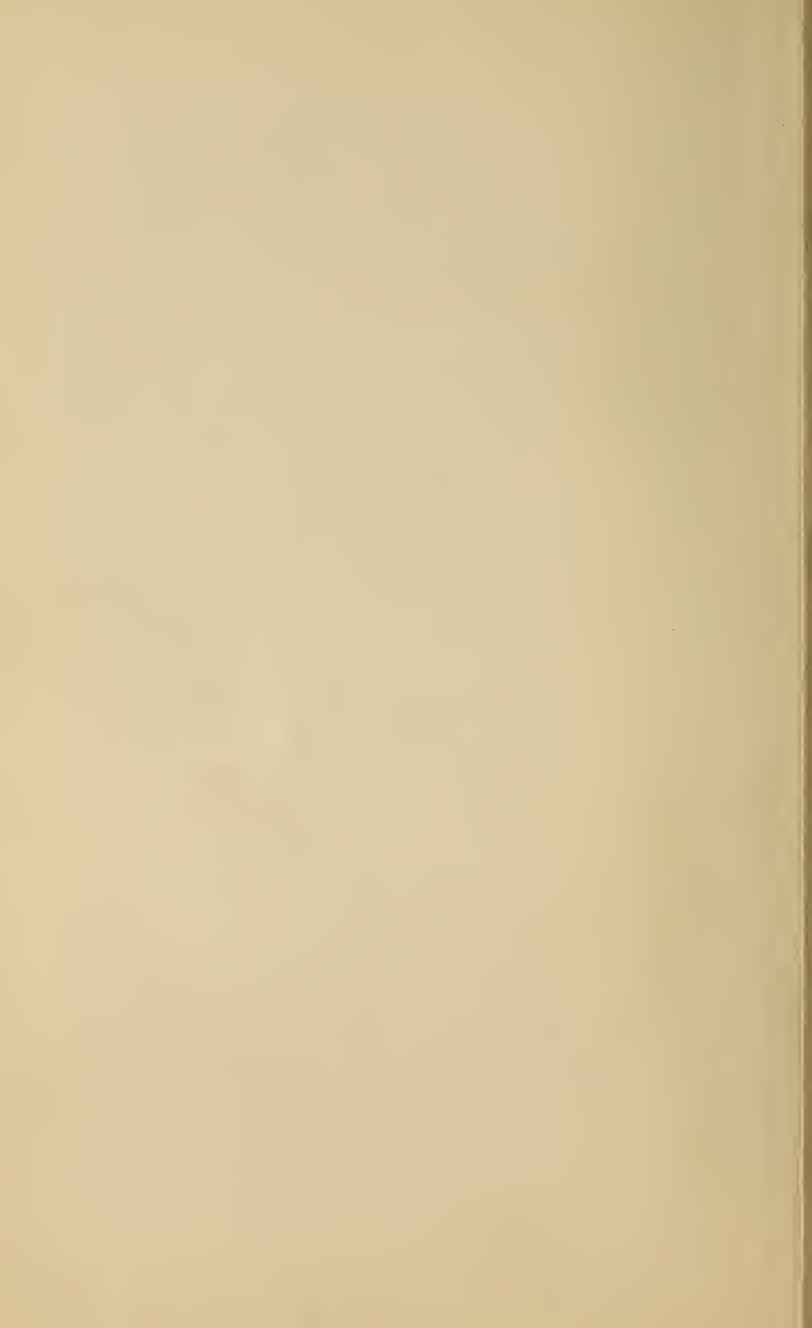
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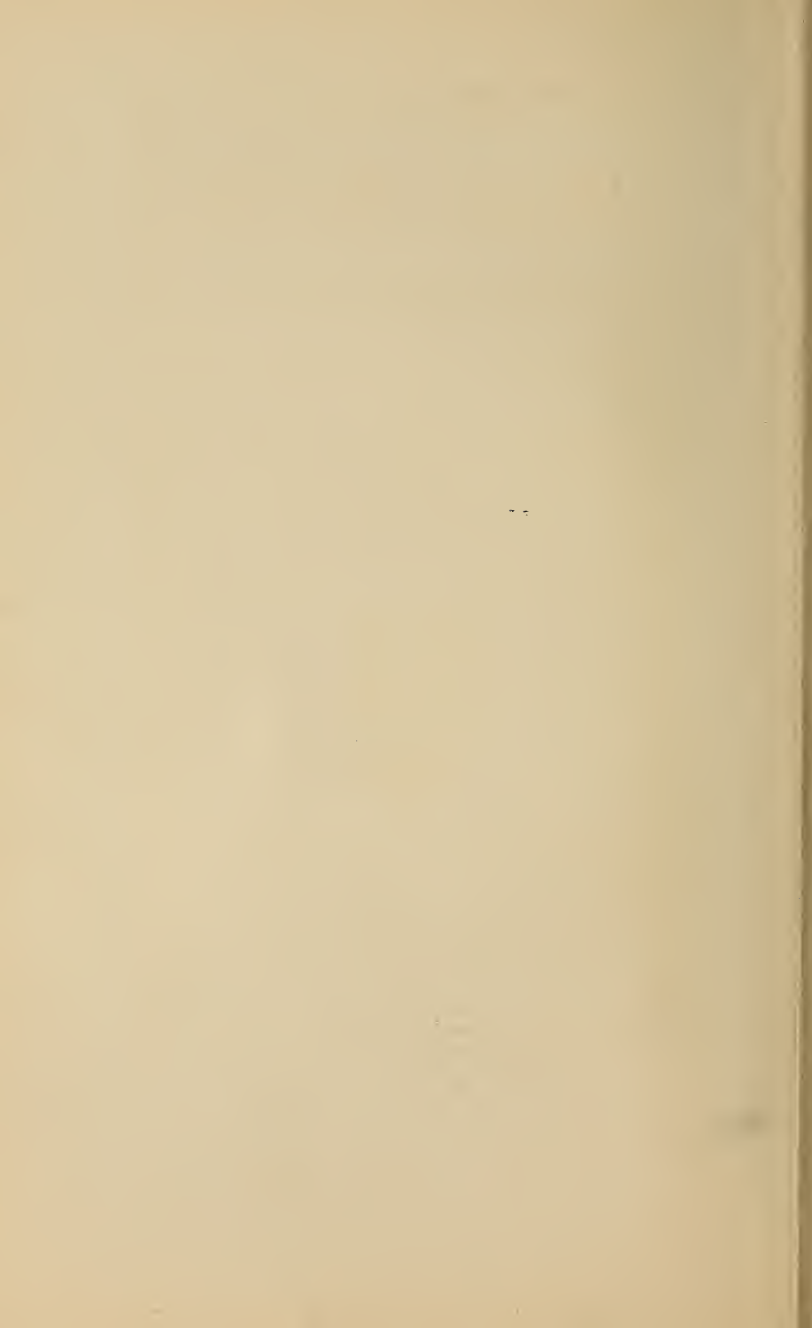








# House Health





# House Health

AND OTHER PAPERS

BY

NORMAN BRIDGE, M.D.

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"The Rewards of Taste," etc.



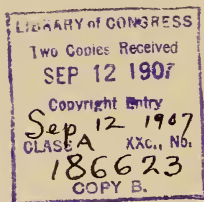
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## House Health



## House Health

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Despite all effort to the contrary people will occasionally fall sick. There are two calamities that we seem powerless wholly to prevent; namely, the occasional burning of our houses and the frequent sicknesses of our mortal bodies. Many of us try at great care and expense and with varying wisdom and ignorance to stand off these evils, and with differing success.

Disease is most prevalent among the poor, especially the very poor. This is largely due to their unhygienic lives; and much of this latter is represented by their unsanitary dwellings, by their extreme and often needless exposure to certain causes of disease, by lack of proper food, and by the debilitating personal habits of some of them. The personal habits of the average rich, however, are nearly as potent in producing disease.

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The influences that cause these conditions are presumably not numerous, and they are easily catalogued. First is bad ventilation of houses, especially in cold weather. Most of even the rich, who do not need to be terrified by their coal bills, live with insufficient ventilation of their dwellings. More than 1,000 cubic feet of fresh air per hour for each person should enter the house for even fair ventilation. Not one house in a thousand in cold weather fulfills this condition, or a quarter of it; and hardly a single house among the poor, unless it is unavoidable by reason of cracks and other openings that cannot be stopped. The rule is to batten up every crack and stop every opening. Weather strips are wrongly supposed to be a necessity in every house in cold climates. If not weather strips, then rags, paper, or old clothes are used—anything to keep out every current of fresh air.

The bad air causes disease in various ways, chiefly by first producing debility and lessened power of resistance to the various microbic enemies that are always waiting to stab the body at its most vulnerable point. Thus easily follow colds, poor digestion, and all its attendant ills, while several infectious diseases develop most easily. The power for work is also impaired, and so come lessened wages with a



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reduction of food and other comforts. The contagious diseases are always more prevalent as well as more fatal in cold weather, because the living poison that causes them is concentrated in unventilated rooms, and the victims take in large doses thereof. It is safe to say that the breathing of bad air produces, directly and indirectly, more disease, especially among the poor, than all other influences combined.

Perhaps second in importance is the danger from disease germs entering the body in water, milk, and other foods, most of which germs have been expelled from the bodies of the sick. Of these the tuberculous and the typhoid germs are the most important. Numerous epidemics of typhoid fever have been definitely traced to food and water, and they were, we now know, substantially all of them avoidable.

The dust that rises from carpets, rugs, and hangings in houses is a prolific source of disease, especially of tuberculosis. Bacilli of tuberculosis in the sputum of the sick, and disease germs of other kinds and from other sources, lodge on such objects, chiefly the carpets and rugs, and, as dust, are thrown into the air by every footfall or movement of these things. Where the ventilation is abundant,

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as in the open houses of summer, the danger is least, but in the dwellings of the poor in cold weather there is little or no ventilation, and this cause of disease has there its most sweeping and fatal effects. Tuberculosis is enormously prevalent. Numerous cases may originate from a single house where a bad case has been harbored. One after another the susceptible occupants of the house take the disease, each having inhaled the bacilli left by his predecessor, and each in turn leaving his own contribution toward the destruction of those who come after him. And all this desolation results from the ignorance or apathy of the people, mostly the ignorance *and* the apathy.

Flies and mosquitoes often bring disease to people. Flies carry typhoid germs on their besmeared feet from infected body excretions to our food supply; they also distribute tuberculosis in similar ways, while malaria and yellow fever among the diseases are, in the light of our present-day knowledge, solely distributed by certain varieties of mosquitoes.

A fourth cause of disease is poor food, often poorly, even foolishly prepared, and too much stimulation. People mostly cook and otherwise prepare their foods for the pleasure of their taste, which in itself is proper, for it

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helps digestion, but they pay little attention to the need of cooking for the digestibility of foods and the getting of the greatest amount of nourishment out of them and into the tissues of the body. So appetite is conserved, if not worshiped, while indigestion is brought on and physical depreciation as a consequence. Hence, much sickness comes and lowering of the standard of vigor of the race. Vast quantities of stimulants (tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcoholics) are taken for the same reason—because the people like the immediate effect of pleasure they produce, not for any lasting benefit, for there is none. Similarly they indulge in various other physical excesses for the immediate pleasure of them, and often to their permanent harm.

Great benefit in more comforts and less sickness would come to people by better housing and hygiene. The needed reforms are few in number and they are not expensive, but some of them are so radical in character as to appear to conservative minds revolutionary.

The first reform to be thought of is not better houses, but better ventilation of houses, such as they are, and especially of sleeping rooms. It matters, perhaps, little which of several methods of ventilation is resorted to,

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but a natural method for the poor is of cheap construction of houses with the main floor well above the ground, and with numerous cracks and crannies for the admission of air. Plastering is not essential; board walls will do, even rather loose board walls. Weather strips are, as usually employed, an enemy of the race; the poverty that sometimes deprives us of them is life giving. No attempt should be made to keep the house heat above  $60^{\circ}$  or  $65^{\circ}$  F. People, young and old, can endure this easily when they are accustomed to it, and they should, as they easily can, learn to enjoy it. Vicious, indeed, is the habit of keeping room temperature in cold weather at  $80^{\circ}$  or above. The usual amount of fuel may well be used in winter, the lower temperature representing better ventilation. And the better air to breathe will enable the inmates of a house to endure the lower temperature without discomfort. The only other provision necessary is, in the case of the weakly ones, more clothing of the person, especially of the feet and legs.

The sleeping rooms should never be closed against the admission of fresh air. To say the night is cold is never a reason for shutting out all ventilation through the windows. Artificial heat is not needed in the sleeping rooms

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of well people, but is usually a harm. It is perfectly possible to fix any well person in bed so that he can sleep in comfort in a cold room, even with zero temperature. If the bed-clothes are scanty a few newspapers laid between the blankets will take the place of quilts and keep the sleeper warm.

I know it will be said by some critics that such a program as this is cruel and impracticable, but the success of the modern treatment of tuberculosis by the outdoor, pure air management has shown that it is easy for delicate patients to endure such measures, not merely with comfort but with great pleasure as well as benefit. And if a consumptive can do it, certainly it ought to be easy for other invalids and for the well people to thrive upon it.

The bedroom air should be so pure always that, to the nostrils of a person coming in from out of doors, it will never seem stuffy; and over the faces of the sleepers the air should never be still—still air means breathing many times over the pollution of one's own respiration—in other words one should always be in a draught, never out of it; there is no other safe rule. A draught of air does not produce colds; it prevents them. Colds come of lowered vitality, fatigue, indigestion,

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and disease-producing germs that abound in confined house air.

Consumptives even sleep out of doors and in tents with the flaps open, in zero weather, and with the greatest satisfaction. This latter has been done during several recent winters in some colonies of tuberculous patients in northern States, and not one of them suffered injury from the experience. The only artificial heat the tents had was that of kerosene stoves or small wood stoves, with fire only while the occupants were undressing for bed at night, and while they were dressing in the morning. The patients in some of these resorts have had the option of sleeping in houses during the coldest weather, but elected to stay in their tents.

In order to conserve health to the greatest degree possible, houses should be free from carpets, rugs, cloth hangings, and upholstered furniture. Only so radical a rule as this can minimize to the utmost the distribution of dust poisons to the inmates. If the floors are covered at all, it had best be with linoleum or some other material with a flat surface, free from meshes, and thus incapable of hiding dust. The best covering of all is good paint, renewed if possible every year. Nor does such absence of the customary so-called comforts

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in the house need to lessen seriously the real physical enjoyment of living within it ; its chief disadvantage is in the violation of custom, the outrage upon fashion, the refuge from which is courage and independence. But there is growing now a fashion to do without these disease-spreading luxuries, as the cult of better ventilation and outdoor life, and sleeping out of doors, is increasing rapidly among the most thoughtful. So rapidly is this fashion spreading that it is likely, by its benefits to the physical lives of our people, to increase their average longevity to a degree that will, within two decades, actually show in the census figures.

One luxury the poor man should have is screens for his windows and doors, in summer time, against the flies and mosquitoes. The screens are more than paid for by the lessened annoyance, to say nothing of the protection against disease, which is a positive benefit. The prevention, in the day time, of the inoculation of his food with disease germs by the flies of summer, returns many fold the cost of the few inexpensive screens of wire or cotton netting that cover the door and window openings ; and fencing out the mosquitoes for the comfort of the night increases the sleep of the house occupants, to the great



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benefit of their health, temper, and working capacity.

That these insect pests distribute among the people at least four infectious diseases has been demonstrated beyond question; and there is strong reason to suspect that further investigation will show that still other diseases, which have long puzzled the pathologists, are disseminated in this way.

The average layman is almost wholly uninformed of the importance of fencing these insects out of his house. There needs to be a concerted missionary movement of education in this direction, by those who know, in the interest of those who do not know. The relatively trifling cost of this protection keeps thousands of families from enjoying benefits that cannot be counted in money; and nearly all of them spend every summer, in needless if not foolish indulgences, ten times as much as their mosquito netting would cost. Protection against flies and mosquitoes ought to be encouraged by law, and preached as a doctrine of sanitary morals, and as a part of personal religion.

The protection of milk and drinking water from typhoid and other poisons is less a part of house sanitation than of general sanitary interest to the community, but it is of the



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greatest possible importance. The purity of the water supply of lakes, rivers, and wells, and the protection of milk cans from washings with contaminated water, have made a large chapter in all recent discussions of personal and public hygiene. Their importance can hardly be overestimated, but in general the poor rarely have the means of protecting themselves from these dangers, except by boiling their water and their milk before drinking them. An immense gain would be made if all the people could know that these dangers often exist, and that they can be avoided by so simple a means—only the milk should not be boiled, but heated to 170° F., for the boiling point changes its taste and lessens its digestibility. Lately it has been discovered that a little metallic copper immersed in drinking water for a few hours destroys all the typhoid germs it may contain, without injury to the potability of the water. So here is a possible easy means of protection from typhoid poison. But it has its drawbacks, one of which is that, as it is so easy a remedy, it is likely to be forgotten at the very time it is most needed. Another objection to it is that dependence upon it is likely to lead to a relaxation in the general watchfulness over the water supply itself.

Typhoid-fever germs are believed to be oc-

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casionally brought into the house on lettuce leaves, strawberries, and other vegetables that have grown on or in the ground. These things are usually eaten uncooked, and so may be dangerous. Sewer water used to fertilize the plants is almost the sole source of these germs. Perfect protection against them can be secured by washing the edibles with a five-per-cent solution of tartaric acid—a harmless substance that enters into our common cookery. The solution is made by adding a heaping teaspoonful of the acid to a pint of water. After thorough washing of the foods in the solution, or their immersion in it for five minutes, it is easily rinsed off completely with pure water, leaving not a particle of its sour taste, nor changing the taste of the foods. Even a little of the sour taste is not objectionable; tartaric acid is quite as harmless to the system as vinegar.

The health of the people would be vastly improved by certain reforms in eating and drinking, but such reforms, like all reforms in our daily habits, are difficult of accomplishment.

Much of our food is poorly prepared by cooking and otherwise, whereby we get too little nutriment out of it, and with such effort on the part of the digestive organs as to im-

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pair their powers, as well as the powers of life. Meat should be cooked with two definite objects in view: to kill parasites in its substance (as of trichina and tapeworm), and to render it easy to comminute by chewing; seasoning will always render it palatable. But we often overcook our meats, even burn them, and render them tough and indigestible. The most nutritious meat is often the toughest and cheapest, like round steak. Such ought to form a large part of the meat diet of the poor, but it should be minced artificially. One of the most profitable implements in any house is a grinding machine for meat. It costs little, and its saving to the family, in a household where it is used to the best advantage, is every year many hundred per centum of its cost. It obviates the need of much chewing of meat; it prevents indigestion, and gives to the body the largest amount of the meat pabulum that is possible. It is substantially true that meat for all children should be finely ground for them, for children as a rule chew their meat very little more than the carnivorous animals do; they swallow it in chunks which are poorly digested, and this is unprofitable as well as unhealthful.

Many families waste their soup bones, and deprive themselves thus of one of the most

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nutritious and digestible foods and one that is easily prepared. They fry ham and make it indigestible, when it could be made both palatable and digestible by boiling. They fry or boil their eggs hard, when they can be curdled more easily and made perfectly digestible. They eat fresh bread and hot biscuits to the harm of their stomachs and the waste of their substance, when stale bread has a better taste and is a perfect food. They laudably try to get good milk and then take pains to prevent it from souring, with the idea that souring spoils it for use as human food—they even feed it to the pigs because it is sour. But the best people of our own South have long since demonstrated that sour milk, otherwise clabber, is one of the best of foods, as well as one of the most palatable of them all. This conclusion has been confirmed by modern medical science.

The betterment of the food and a reduction in the use of stimulants by the people is a perennial subject for argument and exhortation. Progress is slow, if, indeed, there is progress, which there probably is; and plain and rational living, which means scientific living, must be advocated in season and out of season for the better health and greater happiness of the race. This advocacy is good

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for the people who make it, and of some help to those for whom it is made. But the demand for these reforms is insignificant by comparison with the need of more fresh air in the houses, especially the little houses with cramped rooms and mean quarters.

Other improvements that are greatly needed in the dwellings of the poor are: higher ceilings and more cubic feet of space for each occupant; more sunlight through more and better windows; improvements in chimneys, fireplaces, and stoves, so that there will be less carbonic oxide and other products of combustion for the inmates to breathe; fewer candles, lamps, and gas jets for light, and more incandescent electric lamps, to lessen the contamination of the house air; and finally more cheerful interiors and exteriors of dwellings. These considerations are important; but they lose nine-tenths of their urgency in the presence of good ventilation, and good ventilation is many times more vital and health-giving than all of them together. Fresh air is so universally absent in every house where it can, by any prejudice or fear, be shut out, that it stands to-day as the one paramount want in dwellings and places of assembly. With it, the stoves will draw better, the rooms will be found large enough and the ceilings

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will be high enough, and the homes will have the best ornamentation of all: namely, better health and more vigor, fewer colds and more cheerfulness on the part of the occupants. It will be of less consequence whether the floor is above the earth or whether it is the earth.

There is a widespread intense fear among our people, rich and poor alike, of some possible baneful effect of fresh air, of good ventilation and draughts, and especially of the cleanest and purest air of all; namely, the night air. With many of them this fear is more absorbing and abiding than their dread of sin and death, or of the great hereafter. This fear has been handed down from generation to generation like a truth that is sacred—but it is not a truth and it is not sacred; it is a very vile and death-breeding prejudice that can be swept away only by constant arguments, example, and insistence.

Of the other needs I have named, sunlight is the only one that ventilation cannot wholly substitute. Sunlight is health-giving and ought to enter every dwelling, but its chief value is in its power to destroy pathogenic microbes, and if the microbes are absent by exclusion of insects, the suppression of dust, the absence of sickness, and by good ventilation, then the sunlight is not vital, save for

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its effect on those who rarely or never go out of doors; and even to them it is incomparably less important than fresh air. Where there are coughing tuberculous patients, of course sunlight is in the highest degree desirable, for it has power to destroy the germs of the disease; and this is one of its greatest values in inclosures of all sorts; that is, to guard against tuberculosis in the house. But the average room in good houses can have sunshine only a short time any day; hardly long enough to kill accumulating tubercle bacilli; the greatest benefits of daylight and sunlight are and must always be experienced out of doors.

Thus the gospel of the best health and the least sickness is outdoor air and the daylight and sunlight of out of doors. In proportion as our houses bring these blessings within them are we well and wholesomely housed; in so far as they are shut out are we poorly housed. Our theory is wrong which holds that man is fortunate in proportion as he is able to cover himself with a tightly built house. The truth is that almost in proportion as he gets back to nature in the open, or, if you please, back somewhat toward barbarism, does he have the best health and the longest life.

When a rich man leaves his mansion and builds himself a shack in the wilderness that

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he may have for a brief period the greatest of earth's benefits, it is called luxury; but when a poor man must live in a shack because he can have no other or supposedly better house, it is called hardship; and we are flooded with pathetic laments against the fate that compels innocent people, even children, to live in houses through whose cracks the winds of winter whistle and sprinkle snow on the beds of the sleepers.

As long as such heresies last the reforming philanthropist has work ahead of him. He may well devote his energy to a campaign of education against this sort of foolishness. And he may remember for his soul's comfort that few greater services are ever done for any man than to show him that some of the things which he regards as his misfortunes are really his blessings.

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# Human Talk



## Human Talk

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Man is the animal that talks, and a large part of such education as he has is devoted to the cultivation of his speech and the uses of it. Sometimes the whole of his education is of this sort. The literature of the talk of man is varied and enormous, and is the accumulation of ages. It would seem as if every side of the subject must have been studied and threshed over to the last analysis. But this is not the case and cannot be. Evolution of the language goes on with that of the race; and evolution will not stop even though we try to make it. There always is, therefore, and probably always will be, a new word to be uttered upon this absorbing subject.

Much attention has been given to the art of conversation and to the graces of elegant speech, as well as to the value of a large vocabulary. Races, peoples, and individuals us-

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ing the largest number of words and the most varied forms of speech have had, other things being equal, most power in the world. This is rational, for words are among our working tools, and those who have most words, otherwise the largest capacity for communication of ideas, are likely to be best equipped in the struggles of life. Great power to phrase ideas helps to the creation of them, and leads to thought, and so gives the inside track in the world race. But this fact is only incidental to the art called conversation, and for this latter a large vocabulary is not necessary; with the bare knowledge of a hundred words some people can converse beautifully; nor does the size of the vocabulary account for the revelations that a man unconsciously makes about himself when he talks. And many of these revelations are worth studying, for they are marvelous.

There is, among people in general, a vast amount of ignorance about their speech in many of its phases. For example, we know very little about the physical production of speech; most of us are ignorant of the way sounds are produced and syllables made by the human voice, how the different organs of speech, the lips, teeth, tongue, palate, and vocal cords operate, and how their actions are

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coördinated. Few among even thoughtful people ever think of this side of the subject, not to say study it. In childhood we learn to talk mimetically, we never know how or why; and on reaching years of maturity we mostly continue in the same ignorance. Asked offhand to state the difference in the vocal creation—the mechanism of production—of the sounds of the letters *m* and *n*, or of *p*, *d*, or *b*, or of the syllables *ko* and *go*, and not one educated man in twenty, if indeed one in a hundred, could tell readily and correctly. The coördination of many phonetic sounds into some thousands of combinations required for correct speech in any language constitutes a maze of physical and nervous mechanism that is altogether beyond the grasp of most of us. Few students ever attempt to grasp it; and to some of them the fact that the vocal tones are all made by the vibration of two thin strings in the larynx comes as a piece of surprising information.

Nothing better illustrates our abounding ignorance of this side of the subject than our toleration of certain impediments of speech. Perhaps the commonest one, and surely the most discreditable one, is lisping. This disfigures the talk of many people through life, and is usually, and mistakenly, thought to be

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due to some defect in the vocal organs. Ask a hundred educated men and women as you meet them, how to correct lisping, and not two will tell you—while most of them will declare that it cannot be done. Some physicians and voice teachers there are who do not know any better; a few of these are themselves lifelong lispers. But the worst lisper can learn in a few minutes to speak correctly if he will observe even casually how he makes his own sibilant sounds with the tongue and upper teeth, and how normal speakers use the two sets of front teeth without the tongue. Lisping is a hissing outrage upon the language, a despicably unnecessary blemish of speech; and most of the other so-called impediments are just as needless to normal mouths, if not quite so easily correctible.

Ignorant as we are of the way we vocally form our words, we as poorly comprehend the methods and motives underlying the subject-matter of much of the talk of mankind. This latter is the psychologic side and is generally supposed to be simple and easily understood, but it is complicated beyond expression. Talk is said to reveal the man; it does, but often as much by what it omits as by what it utters, and even by the very contraries of the latter.

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Many of the mental aspects of man as a talking animal have been dealt with in fiction—indeed, large novels by some of the masters have been almost wholly devoted to the talk of the people of their plots, with plentiful discussion of the psychologic phases, and these have helped us to a somewhat better understanding of the motives that influence many of us in the commoner walks of life. But the novelists have created little; they have transcribed much, and varied a little what they have heard people say. As men are incapable of creations of fancy that are not somehow constructed out of the materials of experience, the fiction writers must mostly fill their stories with people and situations and plots out of the experiences of life, rearranged, of course, by the skill of the writer, as children rearrange their blocks or picture cards to make new structures and effects. Often the result is grotesque as well as fanciful, as it is meant to be to stir or shock the popular fancy, or as it must be when it is the product of an abnormal brain; and many of the fiction writers have abnormal minds. Sometimes the writers seem moved by a larger purpose, to give the deeper springs of speech and action—really to educate—but usually, as most novelists themselves confess, they write to amuse

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their readers and to sell their books. These writings, moreover, are nearly all woven about the paramount sentiment between the sexes, and so, while for this reason they are usually interesting and frequently fascinating, they have a narrow range when the whole of human life is considered.

Much of the most revealing talk of people could never be written in a story—some of it would be thought improper and might exclude the books from the mails, or, for the most needy of its readers it would be uninteresting. Although the novelist is frequently gifted to a high degree with insight, he often fails to catch all the meaning of the talk he hears, all its impelling motives; and I am sure thousands of people never themselves know or would be able to define the deeper promptings of much of their own talk. Few people have a power of introspection that is sufficiently searching to do this; as few are calm enough, and honest enough with themselves, to do it. When one attempts to interpret the ultimate motives of his own talk he is apt to be swayed by one of two emotions: either his egoism, which gives a wrong tilt to his judgment; or his self-abasement, due to essential modesty or a sense of his shortcomings or his sins. It is a doctrine both venerable and true, that nobody can



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if he would tell the complete story of his life, and that nobody would do it if he could.

Very much of the interesting conversation among people fails to reveal either to the casual observer or to the thoughtful student the whole picture of the motives that lie back of it. In the twilight yonder, for example, there is the hum of low-pitched, intense conversation between a young man and a young woman. They are trying, or appear to be trying, to have a heart-to-heart talk, which means a completely frank talk with each other; but they seem to find obstacles, the sledding is hard, the runners grate upon the gravel. They are wholly unfrank, and they talk in riddles, hints, and inferences, and with gentle shafts of satire, irony, and appealings. What is all this fencing about? The common verdict would be that two youngsters are trying to make love to each other, and really are afraid to do it, but such a verdict would be wrong. Possibly, even probably, the man is too bashful to come to the point readily and say just what he would like to say. Most likely he is covertly trying to learn how the woman would treat a serious proposal if he should make one to her; the deep motive—undefined and dimly perceived—is to avoid the possible humiliation of a refusal. At the same time he appears not

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to know that she is trying to shun a cognate calamity. He thinks she is uncandid or cruel, and she judges him similarly. Both judgments are wrong as to the cruelty, for each is embarrassed by difficulties that are unconsidered by the other. To be absolutely unreserved she would have to say to him: "I suspect that you would like to know how I would answer if you were to propose marriage to me. This in justice to myself I cannot tell you, and if I were to do so my attraction for you would cease." For her to be thus candid would stamp her as simple-minded. So she must angle to bring him to the point of making a proposal—if he is so inclined—without having consciously given him beforehand any very plain hint of how she would treat it. She would not for a small world give him, or her jealous friends and enemies, the chance to say that she had given her answer to a momentous question that had never been asked—and he dreads above all things to be refused by a woman. His cowardice is far less commendable than hers, for his sentimental fate is less dependent upon the issue.

Such are some of the emotions that are quite as moving in the confab as the tenderer sentiments, and almost as unavoidable, and they are at bottom a sort of conceit, an egoism,

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a selfishness that shrinks in an uncourageous way from the chance of a humiliation. It is an emotion that is apt to make one uncandid and unfrank, and appear to be less noble, without really being so. But this guidepost of the conversation rarely or never comes out in a story, although the story may be enchanting, and may give much of the iridescence of the talk correctly.

The thing that appears to the unintentional observer of the case referred to, is two young people who are making love in what seems to be a very bungling way, and whom their friends would like to help along, or stop, or smother. Not only do we usually fail to see the egoistic quality of the talk in this kind of a conference, but the two parties themselves are equally oblivious to the fact that it has such a quality. People in general do not know when they themselves talk or act conceitedly. They dislike to reveal an excess of egotism, or any egotism at all, and usually do not know that they show it, or even that they have it. But when this weakness possesses them it invariably crops out in their talk sooner or later, and if they discover it they try to reform, although the effort may be weak and halting.

So in a thousand ways, by their conversation, people disclose motives that they are not

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even aware of having; sometimes the fact is perfectly obvious, sometimes very obscure. At times they show plainly certain motives they know of and think they hide, at other times they do nearly hide them. If we study people thus as from a height, impersonally, and try to see how their talk is related to their inner selves we shall make some surprising discoveries.

People by their accents, modes of expression, pronunciations, and idioms, reveal their degree of education, their associations, their habits, and the land of their birth. And they are rarely able to hide these things from good observers. A Scotch friend of mine had lived in America for thirty years and had never been able to get rid of all of his brogue. He divulged his origin in nearly every sentence he uttered. Lately he made a visit to his old home and tried by all his arts, by broadening his brogue and the local character of his clothes, to pass himself off as a Scotchman, but he failed utterly. He was everywhere branded as an American. The idioms and accents he had not been quite able to get rid of had stamped him here as a foreigner, while the talk methods he had acquired here, and thought he knew of and could hide while there, betrayed him unerringly.

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If we could hear all the talk of any set of people, a discriminating study might discover a large part of the personality of a given member of it. He might reveal nine tenths of himself, directly or indirectly. The final tenth he probably could not reveal if he would, and he most certainly would not if he could. But we should need to hear every word in order to learn the nine tenths. And of very few people would it be possible to do this, while as to these few we should probably be so biased as to spoil the best judgment.

The obvious motives or emotions that most enter into the talk of mankind are three or four in number; there are a myriad of minor ones, like the wavelets of the sea, but these few stand out as the most cardinal of all. One is a desire to please—that is, to make a good impression; another is self-entertainment. Another is to accomplish the business or mission in hand without special regard to the impression made upon others, that is, to get information and to do things. A third is a certain, usually unconscious, sentiment of protest, an irritability that prompts some objection to every proposition. In this all shades are shown from gentle disapproval to snarling opposition. The mental and moral porcupine quills are turned forward, and every approach-

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ing object plunges against them with more or less force and surprise.

The same individual will often show each of three or four emotions to be uppermost at different times within an hour, sometimes within the space of a minute. These few emotions, with other and minor ones, are commingled in such variations at different times in the lives of people as to make the picture of a moral kaleidoscope; no two are ever quite alike. These pictures reveal themselves in the talk as well as the actions of people, and, I believe, always best and most accurately to the thoughtful outside observer, rarely as well to the men and women in the picture.

The emotion of a desire to please and the emotion of protest run in opposing directions. Both are more or less selfish, but this end is attained in different ways: by the former we gratify ourselves through our consideration for others, and it is always acceptable to others; by the latter we draw ourselves into our selfish shells, and please ourselves while we antagonize others.

The logical purposes of speech are usefulness and pleasure. It is to enable us to express our feelings, desires, and intentions accurately; yet it so often, even among the most refined, fails of this and tells something dif-

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ferent that one is sometimes tempted to doubt its usefulness. Take a sensitive, refined woman with strong imagination and, if her egoism is also strong, it will be impossible to talk to her and be understood at just what you say. Ask her the simplest question and she will immediately guess that there is some purpose back of it that does not appear in the terms in which it is expressed, and she will direct her answer to that something, not to the question. Ask her how many hours she sleeps in the twenty-four, and she will say she goes to bed at nine o'clock. Ask her what time she gets up in the morning and she will not answer you directly, but, if she is young, she may tell you that she does have her lessons ready in time; if she is a matron, she may declare that she does not neglect her morning duties to her children. Not seldom do these undirected, automatic mental changes hit the mark and divine the meaning that may be back of the questions, but most often they are far wide of the mark—ridiculously far from it; and, right or wrong, they are made with the speed of lightning.

I once listened with great interest to a woman's account of the way she managed her children, asking, in the course of the conversation, a few commonplace questions about it,

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and I was on the point of paying a high compliment to her good sense in the matter, when she broke out with: "Oh, I know you think I am densely ignorant and don't know how to bring up my children, and perhaps I don't!" What was the matter with the woman? She merely yearned for approval and required it in every word and even look of her listener; without this she was sad and thought herself disapproved of. A meditative look from her listener would not do; she must have constant manifest approval.

Among such people conversation is often not so much a means of giving out one's thoughts frankly, as of each trying to divine what the other thinks and does not say; and each hiding somewhat of his own thoughts—a sort of psychologic game or gamble. And six times out of ten their judgments of each other are faulty as to the meanings that are hidden. People in gambling for money are said to try to cover their own emotions and divine those of their opponents—that is a psychologic game too. And in that game, as in the games of talk among sensitive souls, the mistakes in divination are at least as numerous as the successes. Invite a refined and polite friend to go to lunch with you, and ask what you shall order for him to eat. Will



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he tell you truthfully? Once in ten times perhaps, the other nine times he will name the thing he divines that you like, or he will have scruples as to the cost of his choice. He may retort with a question as to what you like, and if you say tripe he is almost sure to think you have named that delicacy because you think he prefers it. So he says beefsteak, which he guesses you really prefer. But he is himself fond of tripe, and so are you; and in this blundering of politeness neither of you gets his first choice; both are defrauded.

A man will, almost in the lapse of a minute, order his employees in a matter-of-fact sort of way as to some piece of work, will scold his wife or child for some act or word that happens to run counter to his raw sensibilities, and will then turn to some approaching neighbor or stranger and address him in the most polite and genial terms—making the best possible impression. Could you truly judge of that man by hearing a single one of these speeches without the others—and others still? Each shows him as quite a different being from either of the others. If he ever falls into an unselfish mood of introspection in a quiet moment, the man himself knows he is a different being at each of these respective moments. When he stops to think—as he rarely does—

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just what his moral impulses are in each of his moods, he knows. If you were to ask him why he was so polite to his neighbor, he could perhaps give you the correct answer, but it is doubtful that he would. And he might in his own soul, when mellowed by remorse, correctly call himself a snappish brute for scolding his wife.

But the girl who comes to call on you and talks for a full hour in a steady gale about her "things," and her notions, and what she and her mother and father said, and what the other girls said, and a hundred other things, and all without giving you a chance to wedge in a word—she could not tell why she does it, even if she prayed in sackcloth for the wisdom to do so. Should she be told that she had done all the talking she would be surprised; and should you tell her that the reason she did it was a mixture of bashfulness and conceit, with a disposition to be polite, she would be even more surprised. Yet you would be telling her a very exact piece of truth.

The girl who talks in an interminable monologue does not always do it because she wishes to, but because, if she stops, she blushes with diffidence and is covered with chagrin. The talk is a trick to cover her bashfulness. Like many a young man making a speech, she

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has difficulty to find a good place to stop. There is a vast difference between that girl and the one who just enjoys talking, and runs on, pleased with her own chatter. Her motive power is the purest egoism to be found in the list of human emotions. She will not get nervous prostration from entertaining her guests. She will do nine tenths of the talking, and afterwards comment on the remarkable entertaining power of the guests. Visitors to her are a real boon, for they enable her to work off some of her pent-up potentiality of talk; and this exercise is a constant joy. The woman who breaks down under such a strain is she to whom it is a duty, and a hard one, to entertain, or to keep up conversation. She racks her brain to think of things to say—the other one has so much to say that she has to restrain herself constantly. And when she does stop, it is with vast reservoirs of talk force still waiting to be tapped.

The mental sense of a necessity to talk is an awful burden to some men and women. The presence of people whom it seems necessary to entertain becomes distracting. One feels that he must for their benefit keep up a running polite conversation, and the incubus of that feeling to a sensitive person is unutterable. If some other person will lead, or will carry

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along the conversation, it is all right, as when you are the guest and the other the host. But you become the host and he the guest, and see the load grow heavy. Many a woman of society has gone down to helpless invalidism, to insanity, and to death under it. It is so awful to many nervous patients that they are forbidden to receive calls from others, especially from those toward whom they feel the necessity of being agreeable. One call will make such an one sick for a week.

Few things can be more terrible than to be shut up with one whom you must entertain, or feel that you must, by conversation that shall not flag. For a calm, tranquil nature it is worse than solitary confinement; and for some of the nervous and sensitive ones it is moral and mental annihilation.

In my presence once a girl was trying to satisfy her parents that she was justified in refusing to marry the man whom they had chosen for her. I did not think her arguments were very good, until she said that whenever he called upon her she grew tired trying to find talk to entertain him. Then I knew she had more than a reason—although it did not satisfy her father and mother. She had never learned the golden power of silence, and she was much in need of that lesson. Silence is

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often the best conversation; and it is the greatest test and sign of the adaptation of friends to each other. Friends are never in the depths of each other's intimacy till they can be silent together and find that restful. Till then they are never divinely acquainted.

Another person whose talk is often unfortunate is he who is prone to fear that he has said the wrong thing. He is likely to be a very literalist in his absurd casuistry. He will upbraid himself for something he has said or thinks he has, then go back and apologize for it, often to the surprise of the one he has talked to, who has seen nothing wrong in what he said, or possibly has seen a wholly different wrong from the one the sensitive soul has worried about. The fellow who really speaks recklessly or improperly is usually the one who never discovers it, and even denies it; and he is the last to apologize for it.

The moods of conversation are a perfect aurora borealis of changes and curiosities. People seem at times to be dominated by a particular spirit or emotion that tinges everything they say. At times a whole company will seem to be in the grasp of this sort of an influence. It may be one of complaint, or of anger, of severity or hilarity, of religiousness, or of mirth.

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One of the most interesting is the joking mood; you may often see a company of people swayed for an hour by this spirit. Everyone seems bound to contribute to the roystering. A serious word or suggestion is frowned upon; nothing but jokes, gags, jibes, and take-offs are tolerated. Not even refined humor or wit will do; it must be loud or coarse; finally it becomes a sort of spiritual debauch, from which later there is a recoil in the semi-disgust of satiety, such as follows alcoholic intoxication or an outburst of mob violence.

This spirit sometimes takes the form of practical jokes, even indignities, as in the hazing and initiations of students, and the charivari and kindred humiliations visited upon wedding couples. These things are often done by real if rather coarse-grained friends of the victims; they are unable to resist the force of the class conscience in the matter; one starts the ball of fun and hilarity, and the others must help it along. Each is moved to try to outdo all the others in devising the most striking and extreme infliction. So it is with talk of this sort—one tells a joke, another tries to match it, and feels annoyed or disappointed if he fails, and especially if he fails to evoke a roar of laughter. Conversation is stilted, the company speaks in riddles and

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hyperbole. After the thing is over the participants often feel a sense of disappointment, and have a bad taste in their mouths.

Another and quite opposite mood is one of such seriousness as to shut out all sense of humor. A joke causes surprise, not laughter, and a touch of really delicate humor goes unnoticed. In such a company, if you happen to indulge in a gentle bit of raillery, you are made to feel at once as if you had acted indecorously at a funeral.

An interesting phase is what may be called the bored mood—shown in some specimens of the American sophomore, and in an occasional young person who has traveled and seen much of the world. The color of the talk is of disapproval and fatigue; as much as to say, “Why will you tire me with such commonness?” Or the attitude may be one of condescension, as if to say, “You poor thing—you don’t know any better.”

Another mood is that exhibited by the American college boy in the use of slang. His swagger, awkward way of walking, with his hands in his trousers pockets, lifting up his sack coat, and his pipe in his mouth, are a part of the same fashion. But the talk that goes with it all is perhaps most interesting, for some of it is not found in the dictionary. It

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is decorated with peculiar slang, as, when the young man wishes to indicate that he must go to his supper he doesn't say that. He remarks merely, "I've got to go and feed my face." And he has dozens of such slang phrases at his command, which he uses freely to cover a sort of bashfulness, or to show that he is a real fellow.

An interesting fact is that each generation of boys has a different set of slang words and shibboleths from every other—not a set that is completely different, but one differing enough to show the evolution of the catalogue of slang, which to some degree means the evolution of the language, for many of our classical words began life as slang. Nor are these peculiarities confined to the boys, for the girls of the period, especially among clubs and sororities of girls, develop slang that is quite as picturesque as that of the boys, if a little less harsh and grating.

Changes of fashion in words and phrases are sought and followed as eagerly as we follow the fashion in hats and gowns. The old schoolmasters seek to keep the language as it was, but that is impossible; you might as well try to stop the tides of the sea; and the new fashions in words and phrases are often the creation of the youngest generation, who are



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in the age of easy experiment, and their inventions are at first all slang; later they are accorded, usually reluctantly, admittance to the dictionary.

The bashful mood is the commonest one of all. The poor victim hunts for the right word and nearly always gets the wrong one, and blushes in humiliation whichever one he chooses. He cannot, in the presence of people he is not intimate with, divest his mind of thought about himself, and of whether he is saying or doing the proper thing. If he tries to converse with you he is constantly thinking of himself, in a sort of gentle egoism tinged with a sadness that his dull mind interprets to him as self-abnegation. He is one of the most pathetic victims of unperceived conceit in all the world.

For some of these faults of talk there must be a remedy. Until that utopian and improbable day when men shall see themselves and each other as they really are, we cannot expect that all such defects can be discovered and understood. But diffident people ought not to be forced almost to perish because of their hardships of speech; nor is it necessary that those with greater gifts should sink under the burdens of the conventional demands of

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talk. The woes of both these classes are largely imaginary or self-imposed and therefore in some degree correctible.

The common sympathy goes out naturally to those who cannot talk, or who can talk little; but I feel sure that the other class, those who have great powers, but great burdens of conversation, are entitled to our more helpful sympathy. These are the victims of that unwelcome complex of symptoms badly named nervous prostration. They are always worse by having to entertain others much, to be polite to them, to find conversation and make talk. Some of them get faint, have headache and hysteria, sometimes even temporary blindness from these burdens. They fear the ordeal of meeting people; they shun them, and will cross to the opposite side of the street to avoid the necessity of greeting them; they worry and suffer in the strain of their nerves from the visits and interviews they have had, and live in trembling dread of others yet to come. They grow irascible; they flare up or melt into tears at the merest trifles, and then grieve at their weaknesses, and are chagrined at their faults.

These people are among the more refined and highly civilized of the race, and this fact of itself should entitle them to sympathy. A

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large proportion of them are women. Their high refinement is a misfortune. They really need to get back toward primal nature for their comfort and ease of living; but since that is impossible, they must bear their ills with what help they can get. A great deal of their trouble is wholly needless, and a sensible woman may, by thought and self-control, avoid nine tenths of it. But the thought and self-control—that is the difficulty; not one woman in ten is equal to it, even if she knows the need. She can attain this end only by first knowing what her defect is, and then by compelling herself to do certain definite things to overcome it. This requires a large stock of courage and self-command in a person who is usually short of the average measure of these gifts. The real first trouble is her own intense sense of mental pressure; of a duty to entertain; a fear that she will be socially criticised for being inattentive or for saying the wrong or inapt thing, or for being ungracious. The reason of all this is largely her own lack of tranquillity, courage, and poise; for these qualities are indispensable to success. If she had, or could create for herself, a quiet spirit of imperturbability, all her troubles would vanish at once. If she had ever learned the charm and power of silence she would not

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have this or any other sort of nervous exhaustion; it would be impossible. That her fears about herself in these particulars are at bottom rather cowardly than otherwise does not help matters—only when she knows that cowardice is an essential part of the disease, that moment she has some, if a small, increment of strength to overcome it.

The thing for her to try to do is to let the other woman—for example, the caller—do most of the talking; to have a quiet chat with her, not on stilts or from a pedestal, but down on the plain earth, and about common, proper, simple things; and then to end the conversation with pleasure that the friend has called, and herself be free from the usual undercurrent of mental discomfort and symptoms of collapse.

In order to do this she needs to make for herself a few rules of conduct that she must obey to the death. If she is a very nervous person she should make an oath to herself that she will follow these rules, if it is the last act of her life. If she needs the rules she must herself make them, and then stick to them. Such a code she might roughly formulate as follows: First, I will be natural and simple, not stilted and false, and pretending to knowledge or arts that are beyond me. Second, I

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will not hurry in my talk ; I will pause and be tranquil, and not keep my mental fists doubled up in doing it. I will learn to be silent and not let this make me unhappy. Third, I will deliberately use my art of hinting and quizzing to set my guest to talking, while I listen. Fourth, I will be amused and entertained at my own efforts in thus managing my caller and myself ; and I will steel my soul against any after-suggestion that I have failed or been maladroit, as I do against the temptations of the devil.

Anybody who goes to work on these lines with enough courage will surely find his reward. He can succeed by his own efforts and alone if he will. But in all difficult tasks we are helped by union in effort, as we are always helped toward any goal (and especially if the goal has a social or esthetic quality) by the fact that others are traveling in the same direction. What is needed, therefore, is a movement in numbers, a fashion, a cult, toward the end sought. A society or club having this for its object would help greatly, if its numbers could be large enough to create a fashion. And if the needy ones only knew what they could gain by it they would hasten to band themselves together for this purpose. The name of the organization might be "The

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Silence Club," or "A society for the development of the art of entertaining with a minimum of talk," or, better still, "The Aborigines Club," because it would cultivate a stoicism in silence like that of the American aborigines. The American Indian not only entertains others—if he does entertain them—in almost complete silence, but he seems not to be embarrassed by the fact that he is silent. He ridicules white people for talking so much, as he does for using so many words in their songs. The Indian songs consist of a few usually plaintive monosyllables—nothing more; and for essential musicalness, they have, for this reason, a distinct advantage over our poly-verbal efforts. How profitably some of us might covet a little of this gift of the Indians!

When you come to think of it, the talking bouts of many of our social gatherings are, from numerous points of view, absurd. If you do not think so, then some day hide yourself where you can be a silent witness to one of them. Listen for an hour, and see if you do not think that, with half the words and more time for thought, even an occasional moment of total silence, there would have been a gain. Yet the capacity to take part and help create such a talking bee is an ambition of a large number of people. It is a pity only when it is

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done at great friction of soul and wear and tear of nerves. Another misfortune is that it tends to fix the habit that is already too prevalent, of talking first and thinking afterward.

The recovery from this particular talk disease, as already indicated, depends much on the ability of the victim to evoke conversation by others, while he has pleasure in holding his tongue and keeping his own powers in reserve. And that ability is nothing but the art of making conversation easy. This art is a natural gift to many people, and is the envy of almost every bashful, diffident and self-conscious person in or out of enlightened society. To acquire it, to become adept at it, may well be the ambition of all the victims of this unfortunate malady.

Nor is the art difficult or hard to learn. Anybody can have it if he has sufficient fortitude and self-control, and will persist in patience. But he must first be born again to a few cardinal truths that are always wholesome. To encourage conversation is to bring out and enlarge the powers of the other person, and these cardinal truths concern his interest and fate most intimately. When we consider the good of the other person, we, by so much, sink our own selfishness and conceit—and that, besides being good in

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itself, is the true key to the art of conversation. To think of the other person and his needs is an act of genuine altruism, and leads us not merely away from our own selfishness, but away from our bashfulness (which is a phase of selfishness), so that our powers of rational talk increase. This kind of an effort is thus a means of grace; and it brings us surprising rewards. It is a missionary movement whose value nobody will ever question. It helps those who receive, and it transfigures those who give.

When one sets out in this sort of self-improvement there are a few things he will do, and certain things he will very positively not do—and wherein he will be differentiated from the average man. In developing a better art of conversation he will not air his own things, his people, his gifts, or himself, save in the most tentative way, and to bring out the other person. He will hold in abeyance the subjects he knows most of, or speak of them with apologetic hesitation, and seek the ones the other person is most familiar with. He will ask gentle questions in a spirit of confidential deference so as not to frighten his friend, for questions asked in a conceited or pushing way are sure to scare the other one dumb. If he enters into real controversy the



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conversation may stop suddenly; but the gentle raillery of sham controversy may help it on. Too intense an interest in the subject of the talk may frighten the other person, as it will make him hesitate to change the topic when he is tempted to do so. Quizzing, joking, or ridiculing another often stops his conversation like water on a flame.

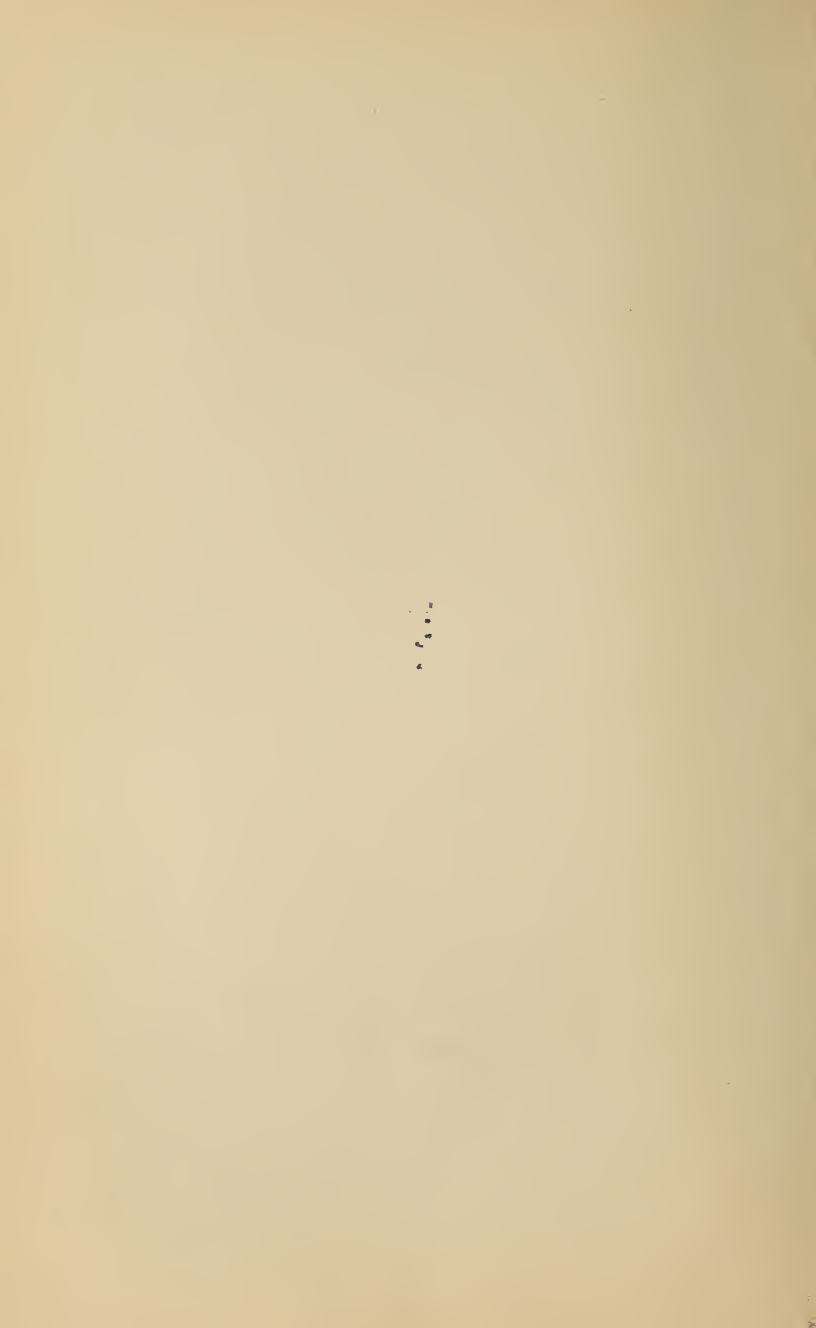
Our artist in talk will maintain a demure mood of interested, rather ignorant inquiry, not critical or protesting, but sympathetic and indulgent. He will not in this go to the opposite extreme of trying to make the other person do all the talking, or allow him to feel that his talk is taken critically, for that would soon shut him up like a clam. He will change the subject of conversation as needed, so as to prevent mental fatigue, and save the talk from running dry. He will not decorate his part of the conversation with silly giggles. He will learn just how much to keep silent, how much to inquire, how much to tell of what he knows, how much to defer, in order to put the other one completely at his ease and let him find his tongue. He will be able to rise to large things and to descend to small and simple ones with equal ease and facility, as the knowledge, ignorance, and temper of the other person seem to require. Thus he will become a skilled per-

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former in an art that is greater than any of the so-called fine arts, because it helps in a larger way the two classes of people who are most in need of its benefits, those who can talk and ought to listen, and those who would listen and ought to talk.

While he does these things he is submerging his own conceits and egoism, forgetting his own bashfulness, and coming to be himself at ease. Thereby he makes a distinct growth in versatility for himself ; he broadens his own horizon and makes his attainments worthy of his own pride. Better than all else, he acquires a mood of mind and a serenity of spirit that will contribute powerfully to his own permanent comfort and force. At the same time the other person learns to talk almost without knowing it, and warms with joy at his own expanding powers. Soon, too, he discovers that even his rude grasp of this new art gives him fresh vantage for higher attainments. He has found the key to other arts beyond.

# The Blind Side of the Average Parent



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Parents naturally think they best understand their own young children, but usually they do not. Most of them would probably regard such a doubt as a great deal worse than absurd. The contention that they who are the daily companions of their children do not and cannot read them truly, that childless people understand them better, would probably strike the mind of the average parent as a piece of harmless sophistry. Yet this blindness is so real that the demonstration stares every careful observer full in the face. Even a cursory study of the daily lives of a lot of small children shows that some of the strongest emotions which influence conduct are wholly unperceived by their parents, although the emotions are perfectly apparent and easily seen by the most casual observation. And the chil-

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dren and the parents reveal the situation about equally, and quite unconsciously. These emotions not only govern the actions for the hour and the day, but, persisting and growing for a long time, as they are apt to do, they order and govern the whole course of the lives of such children, sometimes probably to their benefit, but often to their harm.

The peculiar conduct of the children referred to is neither hidden nor mysterious; everybody about them knows of it. But it is usually ascribed to mental impulses wholly different from the true ones; the real basis of it is as foreign to the minds of ninety-nine per cent of the children's care-takers and parents as are the problems of calculus. Yet the complete proof is as plain as the earth we walk upon, and could not be hidden by any amount of effort, and never is hidden; only the parent, and usually the nurse, refuses or fails to see it.

Parents know a great many things about their children, and know these things intimately and often in minute detail. They know, for example, that a child likes certain amusements and particular things to eat and drink; also that he neither likes to go to bed nor to get up early. A mother can usually tell you why her small child asks for a drink of water—it is thirsty. She knows that if it asks

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for a piece of bread and butter it is probably hungry; and she may feel equally certain of this if it is pie the child asks for, although perhaps the motive is, in this case, nine tenths a desire for a sweet taste and one tenth hunger. Her knowledge of motives is fairly accurate when her boy asks to go and play with other boys, and she knows that she knows why.

But when the boy has spent an hour with her in friendship and mutual entertainment, in even loving comradery as the pleasantest and most tractable of children, and then some visitors appear and the boy becomes a changed being, and begins to hammer her fine furniture, and interrupt the conversation to ask her a dozen questions which she had answered ten minutes before, then she is either uncertain that she knows why, or she attributes the change to some wayward tendency which she is glad to have the comfort of thinking belongs to all boys. She never guesses the true motive, which is an egoistic greed for attention to himself, a conceited jealousy of attention to others. When she is talking interestedly to a caller and the boy pulls at her gown to ask her to do some needless thing for him, and when he throws his blocks and papers on the floor, and then declines to pick them up at her request or command (after having

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promptly and repeatedly picked them up without a protest while alone with her), then she thinks it is original sin, or that it is a punishment visited upon her for some unconscious sin or omission of her own. Not once in a thousand cases does such a mother divine the real cause of the mischief, and apply any adequate remedy for it—and the real cause is plain beyond question; it is clear to the simplest observation, and proven by the memory of every man who reflects candidly upon his own childhood.

It is a doctrine of a modern cult in the care of children that curiosity and a thirst for knowledge on their part are laudable impulses, and to be encouraged. It is a good doctrine. A man looks back to his boyhood and recalls that then he was often rebuffed by his elders when he asked questions from a desire to learn; so he makes the generous resolve that his child shall never be treated thus, and he develops the habit of answering, as well as his knowledge permits, every question his youngsters ask. He sees them grow in knowledge of people and things, and he is happy; moreover he is a little proud of having helped his children in this way. But he has become such a slave to his own habit, that it has acquired the quality of obedience; and so his



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boy, not very far beyond babyhood, learns readily that, although his requests of his father for general indulgences are often refused, if his desires are put in the form of questions apparently asked for the sake of knowledge, he is promptly obeyed. Yes, *obeyed* is the word. The same questions will be answered for the fortieth time within an hour, as though the child had suddenly become mentally dull and had forgotten the other thirty-nine times; then the father, from sheer fatigue at the monotony, is ready to obey the child in other things—to get him toys, and do things to amuse him, to tell stories or sing songs or do any sort of an absurd thing that will satisfy his offspring.

It is only a short step from this experience of the child to the discovery that his parents dread to make a scene by efforts at his discipline in the sight and hearing of strangers and persons outside of the family. So he plans to gain some point in the presence of company and usually succeeds. He feels a sense of superiority in his knowledge of this cowardice of his elders, and he works it to the utmost. Thus he becomes an autocrat. His parents are under a degree of slavery to him that is as perfectly marked out and defined as any other fact in nature. They may be severe with him

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in certain things ; for example, his moral conduct, as they measure it, and especially certain phases of his social deportment ; but in this particular field he is their complete master, and he knows it. They may chide him severely for his unkempt hair and dirty finger nails, and for not saying " please," but he has his way and his revenge upon them when strangers are near. And he maintains this mastery till he passes out of young childhood and often beyond.

A Philadelphia boy of perhaps eight years fell and suffered a cut in his forehead. He was taken by his father to the family doctor to have the wound dressed. The doctor told him that it would be necessary to suture the cut. The boy instantly began to cry vociferously. His father commanded him to stop crying, and told him he was disturbing the neighborhood. The boy cried the louder ; his sire scolded the more insistently. Then the boy looked up and said : " What is there in it for me ? " The father replied : " Fifty cents " ; the boy said : " Make it a dollar " ; the father replied : " All right, a dollar. Now stop your noise." The boy then became quiet, and he endured the surgery without a murmur. He was so brave about it that he was allowed to go alone to the doctor the next day to have the

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wound redressed. Then the doctor gently rallied him on having got his father down to a commercial basis, when the boy said in response: "It was so easy that I'm sorry I didn't strike him for two dollars instead of one." This is a good illustrative example of the efficient discipline under which a boy may, even in his eighth year, bring his parent, when he has the right sort of skill, and enough of the thing familiarly called nerve.

Now, the main impelling motive of the child in all this (and the type is a common one) is the love of attention and of being thought superior, smart, handsome, or wonderful; and there is of course, as a secondary motive, the desire to carry his personal point, whatever it is; this means the love of power or the desire to outdo others—which is the main basis of the propensity for cruelty which most children have in some degree. The chief motive is to show off, to strut; and it makes him do a hundred things in the presence of strangers that he would never think of when alone or with those intimate with him. Sometimes it leads him to queer, unusual, and even uncanny performances to attract attention; and these tactics he often carries on for years, and occasionally toward or quite into adult life.

Once there was a little boy who was pale

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and thin, and had a poor appetite. His condition aroused the interest and the solicitude of all his family and of some of his neighbors; the boy was an object of wonder because he ate so little. How could he live on so little food! A bird would eat as much as he! This made the boy feel important; he liked the attention; being the object of such interest tickled his conceit. So he continued his semi-starvation for many months. He did occasionally take food from the larder surreptitiously, but he was thin, shy, and a little queer, with few of the normal child activities, till his maturity put new life and vigor into him, and he evolved out of this particular foolishness. Later he confessed his part in the deception. In a moment of humiliation he told one of his confidants how he had kept up the deception till his wholesome hunger became more to him than his morbid pleasure.

Such a case as this is not wonderful; it is not even uncommon in human experience. Only most people have supposed that such mental pathology is confined to hysterical women. The latter do sometimes practice this kind of deception for sympathy and attention, and for years continuously. But the egoistic emotionalism of children of both sexes also tends to this peculiar morbidness. In many

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cerebrally unstable children the tendency is so strong, the avidity for attention is so intense, that the slightest indulgence leads to a rapid growth of the moral deformity, unless—what is most unusual—it is counteracted by some friendly help in the opposite direction.

I once knew of a young girl who for some years lived in three distinct and different moral existences. These phases appeared in various relations to each other, and she often showed two, and sometimes all three of them, in a single day. One of these personalities was the natural, sweet child, free from affectation, and normal in behavior, that she was capable of being. Another phase showed her as a precocious child with a religious bent, writing simple little essays which expressed deep contrition for her sins, but did not specify them. These writings were the wonder of her friends, who were also greatly troubled about her sins. The latter were very real, and she committed them in the third phase of her life. They consisted of a succession of petty thievings, mostly of candies and other sweetmeats.

She always had with her in her exploits one or more of her younger playmates, with whom she divided the plunder, and they all enjoyed it together. This participation closed the mouths of her mates against telling, while they

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wondered at her nerve, and regarded her abandon as evidence of a superior being. She gloried in their wonder, while they ate her stolen goods. Her parents and friends were proud of her precocity, and were touched by her contrition. So her vanity and love of attention were gratified, while she looked for fresh petting, and fresh trust after each escapade and repentance. When she was severely punished, as she was once or twice, the little manuscripts grew more religious and more self-lashing, which led to more melting on the part of her parents and friends. This latter fact pleased her and was fresh evidence of her power and of her dubious triumphs.

This was an extreme case of egoistic morbidness, of love of personal enlargement, of self-importance, and of the most abandoned selfishness; really it was in the borderland of degeneracy. But not a friend or parent of the child had the slightest grasp of the real emotions that were behind all this erratic conduct. Each one had some visionary theory by which he tried to explain it; his theory perhaps satisfied him, but it was no explanation, and only served to show his own credulity, and perhaps his forgetfulness of the experiences of his own childhood.

Such parental credulity is, as a psychologic

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fact, as interesting as the egoistic performances of the children ; and it harms the parents and children alike. It wrongs the parents because it leads them to acts of omission and commission that are grossly unfair to the children. Every parent would like to do the best for his child, and so to act as to insure to it the largest career of usefulness and joy. But his blindness leads him to foster and cultivate in the child a lot of the most harmful morbid impulses. Thereby he, the parent, misses one of the finest opportunities for doing good that ever comes to a human being.

To the child these tendencies are demoralizing in the extreme. His mental concentration upon his own person and pleasures, and the growth of his egoistic life beget a state of emotional exaltation and nervous erethism that is fatal to any high degree of stability of his brain. The sanest and most satisfying happiness in life is forever denied him.

Every such child is handicapped ; his career is blighted to a foregone certainty ; he is never as efficient or useful as otherwise he would be, or as he deserves to be ; and he falls behind his fellows in all the best ambitions.

From your lodging window you may perchance look down on the back yard of a poor family, the chief playground of some children.



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There you shall see a little boy playing with a few sticks and utensils that serve as toys. He "rides" a broomstick, and for the moment he is in fancy a horseman, maybe a mounted soldier. He has no store toys that cost money. His only companion, for the time, is his mother, working in the kitchen and speaking to him occasionally from the open door. Presently he is thirsty and hungry, and he goes in and gets himself a drink of water, and his mother gives him a piece of bread blackened with molasses. Soon he goes out again and begins to play, but before long a feeling of drowsiness creeps over him, and he lays aside his playthings, lays himself down, and is soon fast in the arms of a quiet slumber. His mother puts a folded garment under his head for a pillow. In an hour he wakens refreshed and cheerful, and is ready for play again.

Maybe your other window looks out upon the well-furnished back yard of a rich family. There too is a little boy at play. He has many toys, some expensive ones, and he is playing with them. There is a young woman with him. She is not his mother, but a child's nurse, whose ostensible business is to see that his needs are all provided for; that he is clothed and guarded from harm; but chiefly she sees,



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and is instructed to see, that he is entertained. She is his servant, although she thinks she is his mother's servant. She obeys him implicitly, save in a few cardinal things which his mother has forbidden. But his mother never forbids his being constantly amused by others at his command—the thing that tends to nervous destruction. The boy plays quietly for a while; then he is hungry and is fed. Next he begins some new game or play, and soon tires of it. Then he tells the girl to help him about another, and she obeys. Soon he tires of that; then he turns to another, then another and still another, and he tires of them all successively, and grows irritable with his fatigue. With each change he is more intense and nervous, and each successive change diverts him for a shorter time. Finally, dissatisfied with the plays which she has devised, he commands her to invent others, and she tries to, but none of her devices will do; then he demands a dozen impossible things, like horses and cars. She cannot provide them, and if she could he would not enjoy them for more than a moment, for he has reached the end of his resources of nervous energy. He is in a frenzy of superstimulation and hysteria, and cries with a mixture of grief and anger. Then the nurse takes him in her arms and walks

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with him, tells him a story or hums a tune, till finally he stops crying, ceases to complain, and falls asleep. He is carried to a soft couch, but he talks in his sleep from bad dreams, and after a while wakens in a nervous and unhappy mood, with a bad memory of his latest pre-slumber experience. He wakens to go through the same damaging program again; and this is oft repeated, with some variations, through most of the years of the apron-string time of his life.

And the mother seldom discovers that this constant entertainment by others, this everlasting stimulation at his demand, this continuous vaudeville, is harmful to the child. It has never entered her head that the perpetual pandering to a child's love of amusement may mean a weak manhood or chronic invalidism. I have known a mother to discharge a good, quiet, and responsible nurse girl, because she was unable to invent enough kinds of amusement for her boy. The boy did not like her for that reason, and that was enough for the mother. She would have a nurse that the boy liked, if money could hire her, and of course he liked the one who would give him the largest measure of the play that pleased him; and this play was the most thrilling and exciting that was possible.

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The one fortunate thing for that boy was the fact that in a few years he would grow and develop out of the nurse-girl period and into the saving association of other boys, even if it meant many violent adventures and many cuts and bruises. Better a thousand times that, better rough games with their dangers of death, than a continuance in this intoxicating life.

Pleasure in some sort is the supreme yearning of human nature. As a present experience it is a hint of heaven; in anticipation it lightens the burdens of the day; and it may be a continuous if a lessening joy to look back upon. But pursued as a business it eventually disturbs brain stability and emotional balance. It makes for weakness in the severe function, unavoidable to most of us, called the struggle for existence. A child is full of imagination, and self-indulgence is his first law; we should never shut our eyes to this fact. When left to himself he will, quite enough for his good, make pleasure to be his chief concern; it is when to his native impulses in this direction is superimposed by the connivance of others a systematic and long-continued stimulation of his fun-loving faculty, that his other powers are likely to shrivel. Then his joy becomes pathologic and unwholesome, his emotional

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equilibrium is broken, and he is preparing for nervous collapse later in life.

In all history there is hardly an example of a man great in the affairs of men, who grew up as an only child in his family. What can be the explanation of this fact? Certainly it is not poor hereditary influences or lack of the usual educational advantages in childhood or youth; the only child usually has many indulgences denied to one of a numerous family. But often, if not usually, he has the blight of a child's overdeveloped emotionalism, and he lacks something of the strength-giving influence that comes of a family life with other children. He is more apt than other children to live on the love and service he demands; he never grows by that which he gives; and he becomes progressively worse till a new birth of maturity opens his eyes. But by that time his nervous exaltation may have become a fixed cerebral state that in some degree lasts through life, and is a perpetual mortgage upon the promise of his success. It is a certain neglect, as well as the obligation to share, that saves; and the children of a more numerous family often have perforce something of both these wholesome influences, and so a blessed salvation from ills that come to the less fortunate.

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The only child is usually overemphasized in every way that blind and solicitous parents can devise. They provide for all the real wants that they think of, they protect him from danger, they guard him as far as they can against every obstacle, and make him as nearly useless as possible. They deprive him to some degree of the greatest mint of pleasure he can have, which is the equal companionship of other children. Worse than this, they rob him of the benefits that always come from equal contests and struggles and inventions with others. Life with other children amounts to a manual training course. The child who can have this has a long lead of other children; lacking it, the only child in the family suffers. His environment prevents him from knowing the real world till late in his childhood, because he fails to mix freely on equal terms with his normal real world, which is a world of childhood; he is outdistanced by his fellows; he never quite catches up. He rarely or never enters early into the vigor-making tussle of the world, to bear privations and learn to do things with few tools; to bear and forbear, to share and to serve.

His life tends to egoism and conceit, as he learns to manage and deceive his parents. Really inferior to the similar child of a nu-

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merous family, he fancies himself superior because he has more attention and indulgences, and is made more useless, and so he fails to improve as he might, and he grows more uncommendable. Usually able to command the attention of his elders and get their favors, it would be a miracle if he did not grow in conceit and self-emphasis. As a rule, when a child comes to live on equal terms with other children, he soon finds that there are no special favors for him; he must be truly democratic, and the notion that he is an aristocrat is promptly taken out of him, not seldom with a shock that he never forgets. His conceit is trampled on in cruel fashion, but always to his final and lasting benefit. Verily, the only child of a family is usually entitled to more pity and genuine charity than most of the gamins of the street. A few parents in a thousand are wise enough, thoughtful and courageous enough, with their "only child" to spare him the usual effects of such a calamity; and such parents are among the really great people of the world.

The ministry of patience is divine. Happiness comes to us very much in proportion to the simplicity of our desires and the fewness of our wants. Growth and strength are the offspring of a certain degree of privation. It

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is demoralizing to a child to know that he can have most things that he desires; for so his desires expand and multiply, and become exacting and petty. Then he becomes an autocrat without knowing it, and thereby makes himself step by step unfit to bear the pitiless shocks that are inevitable in the rivalries of life and the struggles for personal success.

In proportion as a child becomes an autocrat is his future harmed and the totality of his joy through life lessened. There is no exception to this rule. In almost the exact proportion that he learns to serve and wait does he become strong for manhood and fitted for power and enjoyment. This truth is as constant as the stars. And most forceful children will early become autocrats if allowed to. They are powerless, by their own initiative, to prevent it. Nothing can save them but help from without, or the accidents of life, among which are poverty and the need of dividing their favors with other children.

The marks of the autocrat in a child are unmistakable. Note the positiveness with which he demands things when he is really aroused; and note the surprise when he finds he cannot have them. It is not the surprise of a self-restrained child with the saving power of bashfulness just coming on to annoy and pro-



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tect him ; it is the surprise of a caged and enraged animal.

A little girl once got herself wedged in between two chairs and was for the moment unable to extricate herself. She called out to her mother to come. The mother, seeing that the child was unharmed, came slowly. Then the youngster yelled viciously and in intense anger for her mother to hurry. It was a yell that would be impossible to any child not accustomed to be obeyed. It was not a cry of fear or despair or a piteous cry for help, but a spiteful screech that told plainly how that child was wont to be obeyed by her mother. She would have shown more patience with a stranger or another child whom she might have asked to help her.

Anyone who will take the trouble to study a hundred small children as to their crying spells will make some interesting discoveries. The spells may be classified as to their causation. They are due to physical discomfort ; or to fright, to grief at deprivation, or disappointment of a sentimental and not physical sort ; or to a sense of injured dignity. Children differ in their crying as in everything else ; some cry little, others much. Those who cry much have emotional natures that are more intense and unstable. Those who cry



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little are fortunate in good nerves or freedom from friction with their environment; or they are stoics. The child who cries much is either a great sufferer or has a temperament that is too emotional; and he who cries often from ruffled dignity has an unhealthy egoism with cowardice, and a poor promise for future stability. This last frequently means, in this country at least, a very much indulged child. The little girl who fell between the chairs was furious, and cried from injured dignity, not from pain. In the absence of caste in this country little children are rarely taught a sense of dignity that they feel impelled to defend. But they acquire it by finding that they are obeyed. The love of power is as precious to a child as to a man; it makes one jealous of its safety, and it grows by what it feeds upon, among rich and poor alike.

A small boy was forbidden to go into a neighboring high-fenced yard and shut the gate. The gate was self-locking, and if it closed behind him, some one had to come from the house and let him out. It was a child's adventure for him to go into the yard and have his mother come after him; and he tested his power by experimenting with her. He soon found that each time he called to her from behind the closed gate, she would loyally come

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and liberate him—each time telling him that he must never do so again. One day when he called her she could not come, but sent her cook. Then he flared up, stamped his feet and screamed in fury because his mother had not come to him. His dignity was affronted, his demands had been neglected.

No child would make such a scene on a first experience of this sort. The explosion came of a mental habit born of many hundreds of similar tests that proved to him that he could depend on his elders to jump to his call. His autocratic tendency and so his dignity—ready to be hurt—was a growth of many months.

A precocious and much petted little girl lived for a time in the house of her uncle and aunt. She was fond of her aunt, who took care of her, and who always came to her in the night when she usually wakened and asked for a drink of water. So each night witnessed a little visit with her aunt and some petting. One night the aunt was sick and the uncle brought her the drink, but she refused to take it. "Auntie is sick," he said, "and cannot come, let me help you." "No, I won't. I want my auntie," she snapped out. And no amount of coaxing could induce her to relent and take the drink from his hand. The struggle continued long, and was finally compro-

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mised by her taking the drink from an older cousin, who had been called out of bed to serve her.

This child was not thirsty, in the physiologic sense, and did not need a drink; had she really needed one she would probably have taken it when offered. She wakened and was lonesome and liked attention and service. The drink was incidental. Her temper was aroused by any variation from the attention she had expected. And here was a mature man at her bedside—in his nightgown—helplessly pleading with her, five years old, to let him serve her; and she, vain of her power, and in heartless disregard of her aunt's sickness, doggedly holding him to her ultimatum. What a picture! Yet this case is not at all uncommon; in some form or degree it is represented in the observations of every adult person who has taken even casual notice of the so-called fortunate children of our time. Is it any wonder that such tendencies in children lead to the nerve wrecking of after life?

A curiosity of this subject is the ease with which a mother forgets the affront her child puts upon her. She tells him to stop doing a certain forbidden thing. He says in a tone of protest, "no, I want to." The mother says, "I'll punish you if you do," and repeats it sev-

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eral times over. He stops, waits a few minutes, watching her to see if a real storm is brewing or if it is only an idle threat; then, when her back is turned, he cautiously resumes the forbidden mischief. The mother on discovering this may be chagrined and unhappy, but she forgets to punish him as she had promised, and she recovers her serenity and joy in about one minute after the child resumes an attitude of obedience and amity toward her. She would not and could not so easily condone an offense in her husband or a tradesman or a neighbor. It is not that she forgives mischief on the part of her child—that is easy and natural as well as laudable—but she forgets being foiled and degraded.

It is unfair to the children to charge all their overconceit and bad behavior to their own morbid emotionalism. Their parents often unwittingly help them, for they are proud of the children's achievements, and accentuate the unwholesome conceits of the latter. They help the children to show off, and seem to be proud of them for it. A child tends to strut and act pompously, as though he were better than his fellows and above common clay; his parents enjoy it and frequently encourage it; it shadows distinction for their offspring, and so seems to exalt them. This

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is seldom done in a family of many children, but often in a family of one child, or where a child is far removed in age from its brothers and sisters; otherwise the wings of his conceit would be mercilessly clipped by the other children.

The ideals of a mother are often fated to cultivate a certain degree of effeminacy in her son by keeping his hair in long curls far into his boyhood, and by refusing to suffer them to be trimmed, even when the child in his shame begs for it. If the boy likes to be thus unfavorably conspicuous among his fellows, it is proof to a demonstration that he has begun to take on the girl quality of mind, or that he has acquired a most unwholesome order of conceit—from neither of which calamities will he ever wholly recover. Occasionally a boy with the masculine instinct stalwart within him rebels against his mother who would thus sacrifice his future on the altar of her lesser womanishness. There is small wonder that he rebels as a boy, and his fight is admirable. It is pathetic that it should in after life, as it occasionally does, lessen the respect he has for his mother. It is a psychologic curiosity, and a sad one, that a mother, in her desire to keep her son a baby, should insist that he be, as nearly as she can make him, a girl baby, and

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so do the thing that in her soul she could never wish to do, namely, to humiliate him with his fellows, with whom he must train and struggle and contend, and to give every one of his fellows an advantage over him in his man's career. It is more strange than the childless woman's devotion to a pet animal. The strongest manhood and the greatest career never come of a boy taking an effeminate character of either sex for his hero; a boy's only safe model is a strong man of his own knowledge and observation, or one out of the history of the past. The hero of history is good; but the live hero is the better and more inspiring.

Some of the autocratic children are saved by being sent away from home to school with other children. There the yearning for attention, the tendency to overconceit and selfishness, are taken out of them by their fellows, and they pass into a more normal mental mood. Many times these children are sent away by reason of the nervous necessities of their parents—the parents cannot endure them any longer. The nervous breakdown of a mother is often induced by a few years of incessant slavery to the wishes and unreal necessities of a child (as often a single child as a number of children), but, thanks to this bal-

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ance wheel of nature, when the mother goes to the wall the child is spared. As long as the child is at home its autocratic demands wear upon the mother, and with their mutual nervousness both grow worse. The wise separation of them (from a calamity to the mother, if it must be) leads to the improvement of both, rarely if ever to their complete restoration.

The frequent quarreling among children in a family is vastly less harmful than the common indulgence of an only child or a pampered one. For, while quarreling is bad, it tends to counteract some child emotions that are worse. And it cannot be denied that it makes for strength of a certain sort, if it does not encourage all the graces of human intercourse.

What is the explanation of all this parental apathy? Several circumstances doubtless contribute to it. One of the most potent is parental love, what might be called the animal love, the intense blind attachment of a mother animal for her young, and the reluctance to believe in any unguineness on the part of the child. The absolute singleness and honesty with which some parents deal with their children blinds them to the doubleness of the

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latter. They, being open as the sunlight, are unable to imagine a child taking advantage of them. Alas, that they should so forget their own childhood! They can understand the occasional naughtiness of a child and the carelessness in behavior and untidiness and lack of order of most children; these shortcomings are plain; they show on the surface and worry the parents. It is the outward seeming of ladies and gentlemen that all parents would like their children to have, and so they are deaf and blind to those less obvious tendencies that may harm a child's future. No career of man or woman was ever seriously hurt by bad table manners in childhood, or by the fiction building expressed in the white lies told at this time of life; while countless thousands of child promises of noble careers have been dashed by exaltation of the egoistic emotions in the earlier years. Worse than this, some of those thousands have suffered through life with weak nervous systems—to be the constant pity and the frequent despair of their friends and the desperation of their physicians.

Most parents like to hug the gentle conceit that their children are imbued with constant love for them. They desire above all other things to have everything pleasant in the fam-



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ily; they dread severe scenes and situations. They would rather see the children smile than see them benefited. In their minds it is a misfortune for a child to cry or be sorry; but a few occasional moments of regret, of grief and crying, may add to the child's strength and future happiness more than a year of smiles.

Parents usually theorize and wrongly theorize that lack of order, the use of slang and vulgarity on the part of their children—even the smoking of cigarettes—are likely to continue through life to their infinite harm. But all such peccadillos put together are not a tenth part as harmful to a child's future as the cultivation of the selfish emotions which most parents unwittingly permit, if they do not foster.

Some parents are habitually dishonest in dealing with their children, and seem to expect that the children will be honest and candid with them. They must know they are not candid with the children, and they ought to know that this course would naturally breed similar conduct on their children's part—if inheritance did not make it inevitable. And a man who is willing to be dishonest with his child is not entitled to much sympathy if his child returns him in kind.

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It seems almost impossible for most well-meaning parents to correct their children severely unless they are angry. When not angry, they indulge, condone, and wink at conduct which they have forbidden and promised not to tolerate. But such conduct annoys them constantly and humiliates them often, and so it is difficult for them to recognize or think much about the tendencies that obtrude less—like those I have tried to picture. The tendencies here sketched show themselves less obviously, in most cases, and appear less to demand immediate attention; so they are wholly neglected, or their correction is postponed and dreaded. When the tendencies are finally discovered and their importance appreciated, it is usually seen that their correction will require for a long time almost constant attention on the part of parents, nurses, or teachers; that daily struggles with the child will be necessary for a long time, and a degree of candor and frankness that is most unusual between parents and children, if not between caretakers and children. It is small wonder that the vast majority shrink from such a missionary effort.

Most parents are cowardly with their children in some things; they shrink from telling them certain wholesome facts in their physi-

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cal lives. It is just about as hard to tell them certain things in their mental and moral lives, and parents who really see the necessity for the latter often hesitate and put off the doing of it till they come to pretend to themselves that it is not necessary. The children do not know of these tendencies in themselves, and they must be insistently told of them if they are to know. Primarily, they are as ignorant of them as they are of their developing physical lives, and the annunciation does not come to them by their later experiences or from other children, or from undesirable acquaintances as is so commonly the case with the knowledge of physical development. When they do learn of the emotional injury done to them in childhood it is usually in the reflective years of maturity, and long after the mischief to their nerves is beyond repair.

The greatest obstacle of all to any betterment of the conditions here set forth is the inability of parents to understand the psychology of their children; which is very much like saying that the chief reason why the average parent cannot see is that he is blind. The parent, like people in general, rarely sees as a motive for an act or a line of conduct in another, an emotion which he cannot easily im-

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agine himself as possessing for the moment, or under like conditions. He cannot picture himself as moved by egoistic exaltation in the circumstances in which his child is placed. He cannot remember that he himself perhaps thirty years before was moved by such emotions in his daily doings. He was so moved then, as his child is now, but he did not know it then or afterward, and his child is ignorant of it now. What is more, he does not as a man know definitely when or how he shows the same sort of emotion at the present time; somebody else may tell him—drive it into his head, if such a thing is possible, but he substantially never discovers it himself.

A hysterical woman disfigured beyond expression by such emotions never knows at the time the nature of her affliction. If she sometime discovers it, by a degree of introspection that is both rare and noble, she usually sets herself about correcting it. It is the observing and discriminating friend who most surely discovers this overpowering twist in the mental and moral nature of children. Adults occasionally see it in the children when it is pointed out to them, and then they readily look back on their own childhood and confess to themselves that they were dominated by such emotions then. This, then, is an affliction

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that the individual, whether child or man, rarely discovers himself, but must be helped out of, if help ever comes. The helper naturally at hand for the child is his parent, yet there is hardly a person in the world so little likely to help him in this particular as his father or mother.

This affliction is like sin, into which people fall easily, unconsciously and insidiously; the sinner needs to be brought to a sense of his condition by another. Usually it is a shock to him to discover his iniquity; so it is here, the blighted one is covered with shame. Would a parent cover his own child with shame? Yes, and he often does for some temporary and perhaps trifling breach of deportment; but rarely for an emotion that stealthily guides his conduct wrong, least of all for one that is so hidden that not one parent in a hundred ever sees it—that most parents refuse to see.

Some of the most glaring exhibitions by children of the emotions referred to—the strut, the showing off, the pomposity, the smartness, the impudence, even, are often regarded by their elders as cunning, as evidence of precocity and the promise of a coming great man. Hence the parent, as well as the child, is proud of the conduct. Is it likely that a father will

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chide his son for a thing he himself admires? Is he likely to deliberately blast a budding possible great inventor, or business magnate, or college professor, or president of the United States?

Yet, it is cruel to say that a child may not be saved from the harm of egoistic emotions run wild. In order to be saved, if he is to be saved truly, he must be made to know his tendency early. The only way he can know it is for some one to tell him positively, kindly, and confidentially, and by acts as well as words, and by insistence long continued if need be. This is a very difficult task, and it takes courage. It is a rare woman who will say to her child, and say it firmly and without anger: "This thing you are doing is the result of your foolish conceit; you do it to show yourself off, to get attention to yourself, and for no other reason. You are perhaps unconscious of this fact, but you must try to understand it. You must stop thinking so much of yourself; and, to help you, I will cease helping you and let you help yourself. You must serve others more and you shall be served less." The average woman would find the telling of this to be a large tax on her courage; and to do it repeatedly and not to relax her rule as to the indulgence of the child

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would take more strength of purpose than most parents have.

Through the babyhood of her child the average mother has constantly petted and amused it, and has been herself comforted by this service. To her the child's crying was a thing to be stopped by any gratification whatever; she responded instantly with sympathetic attention to its grief and petulance; she nightly walked the floor with it in her arms to put it to sleep; and she provided, as by instinct, everything possible for its entertainment. This habit, therefore, became fixed and firm, and she had as much joy in it as her child had, and possibly more. To expect that now, out of her wisdom and philosophy, she will completely change her ways, make her child go to sleep alone in a darkened room (crying if it will); that she will stop buying expensive toys, and compel the child to amuse itself or go unamused; and that she will refuse absolutely to respond to its autocratic demands, is to expect what is next to impossible. To hope that she will forego the surpassing mother-joy of amusing her child, and try to find comfort in seeing it amuse itself, and in the better hope and prospect for its future as a man or woman—to expect all this, is to look for a degree of sense and courage and wholly unselfish

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love that is wonderful, heroic, and extremely rare.

That so few people have this courage and see the need of using it in these ways, permits our homes and our infirmaries to be filled with adult nervous wrecks. And there seems to be proof enough that the number of victims of such invalidism is not growing less, but is actually increasing in this country to-day.



## Some Commencement Ideals



## Some Commencement Ideals

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### *A Baccalaureate Address*

To receive a diploma that stands for four years of work and study is an epoch in the life of any man—it is a milestone in his journey. A man's career is marked off by several milestones of differing significance. Next after infancy comes that one that is shown by the beginning of memory; then later that of selecting his school or college and mapping out his plan for youth—for his man's career is rarely outlined with any certainty till after his graduation from school. Much more important to his future, to his sentimental after-life, is the milestone of his graduation from college, if he is fortunate enough to be so graduated. Around that event cluster the most precious memories, and through it and because of it, often come many of the best and most helpful associations. Alas for those

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who have been deprived of such memories and associations; who, whatever their achievements, are doomed to the pathetic, life-long regret (or delusion) that they are "uneducated."

The diploma of a professional school (especially if from a university) is in some respects the most important milestone of all, for it opens the door to a practical career in a life work; it is the threshold to the great world's tussle, to its toil and sweat probably, and maybe to its rewards—rewards that are always sweetest if they come, and come only, with the toil.

Now that you have your diplomas, having earned them in honor, one of the first and most natural questions is, what you are going to do with them.

Probably no two of you have the same notion of the worth of the diploma or its meaning; and you will doubtless dispose of this more or less precious document in differing ways. One may frame it in heavy ornate molding, and hang it in his office in a good light, and contemplate its beauties; he may expand with pride as he looks upon it and as he sees others admire it. Another believing that it is somehow needful to expose the diploma to public view, will frame it mod-

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estly and hang it in some shadow, perhaps behind the door, where the inquisitive or those who doubt his professional character may inspect it. Still another will put the roll away in a drawer or on an upper shelf, to be shown only to the officers of the law when necessary for registration or proof.

The diploma, the graduation, are a high wall that men scale with some difficulty, to enter a larger field which has some rewards for them if they work, with, unavoidably, some penalties and many tribulations. This first achievement is to some men so remarkable that they linger about the wall, wonder at it and at themselves for having scaled it—and have widening joy and admiration in their wonder. To others the wall is forgotten or altogether ignored, after they have planted their heels solidly into its farther footstones, and plunged forward into the new work ahead of them.

As differing and varied are the estimates of the meaning of this hour by those who are here to do honor to your decoration. To some who are sentimentally near to you, it is an hour of moist-eyed gladness for your reward, and for this evidence of your growth and achievement; to others it is merely a ceremony, a display, and, to all of them, you, the recipients of these diplomas, possess various

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shades of physical bearing, beauty, and plainness, and are respectively endowed with specific virtues or vices which the interested observer has no doubt in the world he can divine from the shape and expression of your faces and the carriage of your bodies.

Others look with more certain, and with solemn if unmournful eyes, through the doings and sayings of this occasion to the life and labor that are to come ; and they mentally speculate as to the way, the spirit, and the outcome of it all.

Of this latter class are the thoughtful veterans who have traveled some of the way themselves. How you can avoid the snags over which they have stumbled ; what new obstacles are likely to arise in this later day, and what new word of courage and caution you need now ; what new talisman can be given for the future ; these are questions that rush in upon the older men, who have acquired the perspective that comes only with the marching years of the journey.

The career of every man is made by several elements : among these are his opportunities, his powers, his equipment for his particular work, his continuity of purpose, the character of his personal industry, and the accidental occurrences of his life. It is determined quite

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as much by the plans and conception of his work and of himself with which he starts out; and these plans and notions are his *ideals*. Probably the ideals of no two men are ever exactly alike, but everyone has his ideals of some sort and in some measure; they are back of all the ambitions and aspirations of young life, and they grow fixed with age. They constitute a large part of the motive power of most men who achieve anything of worth.

That a man's ideals are his making or his destruction is a very old truth, but it refers mostly to the cardinal virtues. The standards of honesty, truthfulness, uprightness, and personal cleanness are the highest teaching of all time, and they are substantially the same throughout the ages. They are the indispensable ideals. To enlarge on them now would be to preach a sermon, and that is not the present purpose.

I would rather discuss a few of the usually forgotten or unthought-of ideals, the recondite standards of work and life and conduct. For there are many such ideals, and they govern the lives and order the careers of men in unexpected ways. They are varied in force, in character, and in degree, and they nearly always possess a man without his knowing it; often without his friends' knowing it. Every

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man is in the grasp of one or more of them most of the time. They are automatic and never stop; and they often control a man like a fetish. They are hidden leaks that lose his power and initiative, or some undiscovered supply that increases them. A man may forget for an hour his good resolves or his religion, but these stealthy, idealistic guides will stick to him like his habit of breathing; they work with the certainty of the subconscious mind; they never sleep.

These ideals create habits that control us inevitably; and we often go on for many years or through life completely ignorant both of the ideals and the habits they have created. They have fixed themselves upon us and made or marred our work, and we are blind to everything but the end results—and at these last we wonder; and usually account for them in the wrong way.

What are ideals for? To make a righteous life? Yes; but to make a successful one as well; to increase our power to do for ourselves and for others; to increase our capacity for the larger joys. Within the realm of sanity one does not have ideals whose purpose is misery for himself, damage to his aims, or harm to his friends. But the ideal of enmity to the wicked and to the enemy still exists and is very



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old; it will probably never wholly die out of the human heart.

The greatest success in life, on the average, comes to those with symmetrical powers and character; not to those who are warped and one-sided. So that ideal is of most worth which makes a man stronger in his weaker powers; that is most worthless that increases his unbalance and accentuates his warping. Wherefore, there are fit and unfit ideals.

But the apparent paradox is that, apart from the greater virtues, the ideals a man usually acquires, those which dominate him—what we may call his secular ideals—are *unfit*; that is, they are such motives as increase his asymmetry rather than lessen it.

The reason for this is not strange; our ideals in this sort come to us along lines of least resistance; we grow into those we have, rather than others, because it is easy to do so. The reverse ought to be the case; we need ideals that will help us over our defects, not to increase them. We are as far wrong many times in our educational methods. A boy selects as the thing to study that which he learns easiest and knows most about; and he neglects the tasks that for him happen to be harder. Such a course tends to enlarge the greater talent and to shrivel the lesser one.

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This large talent is often the sole substance of genius; in the greatest degree it amounts to degeneracy, and the world is not in such need of geniuses as to make an approach to degeneracy, or to the borderland of it, profitable. Society could better do without the geniuses, now and always—it does not need them.

The sometime gospel of pedagogy holds that the child, from the beginning, may select his course of study—learn what he likes and omit what he pleases. Of course he likes those things in which he is apt and strong, and hates those hard ones in which he is weak; and so he grows more uneven. Happily, all educators do not agree to this tenet; some believe that a child's course of study should tend to make a symmetrical man, and not favor one-sidedness. This is the part of wisdom.

Thus of a man's ideals. They ought to contribute to his power and increase his happiness. But unfit ideals—both positive and negative—are the source of a great amount of grief and failure. That man who knows (from his examination papers or otherwise) that his use of English is crude and blundering, should have the perfection of the language for one of his ideals; he should try to acquire a critical sense of it. But this is the very thing he

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is least likely to do, because his consciousness of his fault is dull, and the ideal is hard. The lack of such an ideal has kept many a man below his deserts, and sometimes has even blasted a career. I know of several notable examples of this kind. One was a man of great superiority in his profession, who failed of appointment to a professorship which he had coveted for years, and for no other reason than the lack of such an ideal.

If a man could know that in his demeanor he is liable to be rude, brusque, and impolite (as his neighbors know it) he might erect an ideal of gentleness and courtesy with great profit to his spirit, and, if he practices a profession, profit to his purse also. Probably he has already fully developed powers in other directions, most likely in force and effectiveness. Can he discover the need of a new ideal and create it? Probably not; for nothing but a new birth in introspective psychology can enable him to do it. And if he thus acquires an ambition for a new ideal, he must watch himself for long before he can create a new habit.

On the other hand, the man who is naturally courteous and thoughtful of the feelings of others in little things, and especially in their entertainment, is in danger of overworking a

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good ideal. For it can be carried so far—and often is—as to entail a great burden in the duties which it seems to impose. It is a burden by the fear, even terror, it often produces in its possessor lest it has been or may be violated. And when it is in excess it has no compensating advantages, except some very dubious ones. The standard requires the person to be polite and to entertain others in conversation; so a sick man wears himself out entertaining thus a lot of people he is under no obligations to. A distinguished friend of mine, when on his deathbed, and too weak to talk to anybody, actually felt called upon to apologize for not talking. The impression grows to be a sort of craze—not only to talk, but to believe it to be a duty to talk whenever within earshot of others. Then follows a species of deception and *finesse*—for we get tired of people, even our friends, and tired of talking to them; we shun them, keep out of their way, avoid them, give a lot of fictitious excuses for not coming, and for being out when they come to us. For we know perfectly that once in their presence nothing but syncope or death can stop the wagging of our tongues. That we have enough of plain personal courage to stop it is, in our civilization, unthinkable.

Some ideals as to our dress, adornment, and

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personal demeanor are peculiar if not uncanny, and lead to many bypaths that take us into unexpected regions. Sometimes the effect is in itself grotesque, and very often it is potent in its influence on character and success in life. The sum total of these results is usually unfortunate if not bad, the sole advantage being the happiness which the individual himself seems to get out of his indulgences. It is a cheap sort of happiness, always discolored by a degree of vanity; but many of us seem to find substantial joy in such things. Once in the East there was a judge, who, for a quarter of a century, appeared daily with his hair in large long curls about his neck. It was inevitable that this should influence his character and his relations with other people. The curls amounted to little in themselves, but they singled him out from among the rest of the community, and they were a large factor in his life through the self-complacency and egoism which they ministered to in the man. He could no more avoid thinking about his curls and their effect on others than he could stop winking.

If it were the custom for men to wear rings in their noses, it would mean little that a particular person did it, except a thraldom to a mere fashion—a thing we are all constantly

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victims of to some degree. Fashion allies us to a race, a guild or a set of people. But for one man in a hundred thousand to wear a ring in his nose takes him out of the fashion and into the realm of eccentricity and overconceit.

There is virtue in the defiance of that kind of a fashion whose only real purpose is display; but the judge failed of this. Such a revolt would have required a fine sort of courage and independence. If that kind of fortitude had been required in order to wear the curls, he never would have had them. It needed only a species of vanity, a desire to do something others did not or could not do, something that would distinguish this man from all his fellows; or an abounding desire to please his personal fancy. Nor did he curl his hair from an idealistic desire merely to distinguish himself from others. That could have been done through creditable work, art, achievement, daring, risk, or courage—which countless thousands of men and women are laudably doing every day. What the judge did took no courage worthy of the name, no work—save a few minutes each morning with his curling facilities and the help of some member of his family—no attainment or study or skill. He paraded his curls like the color of his skin, or the shape of his features, or the

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gait of his walk, and without a particle of credit to himself.

Now, the curls were a trifle, like an inch-long finger nail, or a beard as long as the body of the wearer. These are little things in themselves and amount to nothing in the world's greater arithmetic. But they are meaningful if they signify a mental quality, an emotion, which colors the life and segregates in some way an individual from his fellows—and they always mean a weaker rather than a stronger character. They are more vital still if they beget, as they tend to, an emotional bent that lessens the power of the individual in the work at his hand. Such a waste of personal force and influence is a sin of large proportions. And it is no adequate answer to this criticism to say that such habits, so acting, are happifying to the individual, for joy can come as truly from noble emotions as from weak ones, and no man has a right to pleasures that dwarf him.

To make oneself odd by defying a useless or injurious fashion, when it takes courage to do it, is commendable. That is to defy the class conscience and take a stand for the sake of personal conscience. The fashion in trifles, like neckties and ribbons, is sometimes the refuge for souls that lack courage. To refuse

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to use tobacco or liquor, or wear high collars or tight corsets when they are in style, sometimes takes the manner of courage that pushes a man into battle, or makes him face an epidemic of deadly disease and refuse to run away from it. No case can be made out against such courage—it cannot even be laughed down. It is the attribute of the real and not the sham hero.

There are some ideals which a professional man cannot afford to do without, as there are those which he ought to shun with all his might.

One of the latter which is very common to us is that of our own sense of certainty and sufficiency. We fall into it unavoidably. We possess, we come to believe, the very foundations of all wisdom, and we are strong for reforming the world, if not making it over, in the first decade of our professional lives. So there grows up within us a great amount of dignity and personal importance that are sure to be jarred by sundry experiences of life which are inevitable. But we feel bound to protect and defend them nevertheless. When a man seeks our professional advice and then fails to follow it, we sometimes feel affronted and are grieved over it, and so waste a store of good energy that we might put to a better use.



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It is a slow lesson for us to learn, that people have notions of their own—foolish ones often—which they have been following more or less for centuries, and that they have some rights to follow them even if they are foolish; also, that they frequently will follow them in spite of any and all of our efforts to dissuade them. And we cumulate unhappiness for ourselves when we let our sense of professional dignity and personal importance run hard against them. It is a long step forward when the doctor, young or old, can say to his misbehaving patient, and say it gently: "Of course you do not have to follow my advice. It is given to you on the theory of doing you good, but you can ignore it if you wish—only, remember, that if you do neglect it, not I but you take the responsibility. I am willing, even glad, to be freed from responsibility if you wish me to be." This sort of tactics not only shows that the doctor has learned to control himself; but it also is the most potent influence to clear the moral atmosphere between himself and his client.

Have an ideal that you will do your work honestly, faithfully, and as precisely as possible, not lazily or carelessly, and that then you will take the consequences without whining. This is of the very essence of the best courage;

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it was the ideal of the greatest soldier of recent times—and it saved his cause and himself. Moreover, after you have planted your seed as best you may, not perhaps as well as another might, but as well as you can, then watch for its sprouting, but don't dig up the ground to see if it is beginning to sprout or is growing downward.

Shun the vicious ideal of speculating in your mind as to what in general others think of you. Don't walk down the street mentally asking people whether they recognize in you the sort of fellow you think you are. They will never so recognize you anyway; and for you to do this distracts the mental attention and prevents serious work; it leads to worry, fear, suspicion, jealousy, and heartburnings. It never pays. And when with exalted emotions you begin to guess—for many will, and usually guess wrong—as to how others think and feel about you, then you are walking along the rim of the grand canyon of gentle lunacy. You may never do it—pray God that you never will—but you can then very easily plunge over into the abyss.

I once had a friend, eminent in his profession, who, when called in an emergency to see a patient of another physician, always prescribed with ingenuous loyalty both to the pa-

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tient and his doctor. But he was sure to go round the next day and make an unexpected call on the patient. When asked why he did it, he said, after some hesitation: "I do it to see how I stand with the family." He was a good man in most things, but he was wrong in this, and this foolish ideal tinged with discredit his whole career. He had no call to constitute himself a detective to find out whether the people thought well or ill of him; and it was little advantage if he did know, for if it was well his vanity grew, which was needless; and if it was ill he increased his bitterness, which was harmful as well as unnecessary. His duty ended when he had served the patient honestly and scientifically, and he ought to have had the courage to rest his case there. His duty was, like the duty of all men, to know himself that his conduct was intentionally correct and tallied with the golden rule. Then he needed manliness enough to walk erect and let others think what they might.

One of the best ideals of all is that we will not and cannot afford to be petty and trifling. This is a hard one to hold to, so naturally do we fill our minds with the trivialities of life. We talk about trifles, hear about them by the hour, and read them in the columns of gossip

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about folks, in the daily papers. If you care for a curious study in the anatomy of your own daily life, just make a list every night for a week, of all the trifles that have concerned your mind during the respective days—and lay the record aside for a year. Then read it over carefully and say whether you think it was a profitable week.

One of the hardest things of all to do—and one of the most important to be done—is to make sure that we do not regard to-day that thing to be momentous which to-morrow we shall know was a trifle. The struggle after real consistency is a hard one; and a fine sense of proportion is a rare gift.

One of the greatest achievements of a young doctor is to be able to be dismissed by a patient and be serene about it. It is a question of point of view and the relation he thinks he holds to his patients. If he has the only right view, namely, that he is a servant of the public, and that his relations with his patients must be of absolute mutualness, and that he most of all desires that the relations shall cease the moment the mutualness is broken; if he can measure up to this platform he has smooth sailing; otherwise, he is sure to encounter repeated seas of water both hot and cold, that will rob him of many of the joys of

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life that he is entitled to and very much needs.

Numerous professional men go through life with such false notions about their fees as to create for themselves a lot of trouble. Their difficulties are chiefly of two kinds. One is an unreasoning idea, and wholly groundless, that all clients must be averse to paying for professional services, and resent being asked to pay. One who has this idea is likely to feel that sending a bill, and particularly the dunning of a debtor, has some of the qualities of a challenge to combat; and at best he finds it a very unpleasant task. This is all wrong; the average client expects to pay a fair fee for faithful services; and to take the contrary view discredits both the doctor and the public. Of course there are a few men and women who have no appreciation of their just obligations to anybody or anything, and always try to shirk them—but they are the exception, and we ought to be willing to teach them some lessons by wholesome insistence, and to do it without anger and without looking or acting as if we had been stealing.

The opposite ideal with which a few start out is that of coveting the enormous fees that a few men have received. This attitude is unfair to the public, who should only in the rarest

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instances be expected to pay such sums—and can only in a few cases afford to pay them—and it does the doctor discredit, begets a spirit of sordidness, and works against the best service of the profession to the public, which is one of the most sacred of all duties.

Let us first be scientific and faithful to our patients; let us acquire friends and a large clientele if we can; then let us raise our fees to keep down a flood of work that happens to flow our way. When, if it ever comes, something leads the public and the profession to make a large enough market for such talents as we have, then let our fee-bills to those able to pay recognize the fact; but let us never, as we hope for future happiness, be grasping with the poor people, who give the world its best lessons in frugality and honesty; and let us, as we hate meanness, never forget our own beginning days of small things.

Let us be honest to science and to ourselves. If we have to shade the fact to the patient for his good, and even to give him placebos to the same end, we must never deceive either science or ourselves. There is only one right way to study and practice medicine, and that is in a spirit of humility to the truth, and especially to a new truth—but a truth proven. For the new truths come and will continue to come,

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and with a conservative skepticism we must keep our minds open to receive them.

Probably the most effective mental quality that most young practitioners lack—that few men have at the beginning—is a sufficient gift of imperturbability. No other quality so makes a man, especially a doctor, superior to accidents, emergencies, and trouble as this one; as no other is so profitable in making him a power in the profession and in the world.

If a patient dies on the operating table, or goes out in a minute from pulmonary hemorrhage, or if you discover you have blundered, you must not shake; and you must not throw up your hands while life lasts. However appalling the emergency may be, you must not be discouraged, and you must make your best fight when the tide sets against you. In athletic games that man is worth little who can only play his best when victory and the shouts of his friends are in the air. So in this professional life, and in all life's struggles, that man who is strong only when no calamity threatens counts for little; he is nearly worthless, and may be worse than that. In this civilian career the best qualities of a good soldier are needed, namely, dependableness in trouble.

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Finally, there are a few ideals that are so vital for an all-round success that they have the quality of sacredness. One is that this business of life is too important for us to waste time and energy in personal contentions. If we contend it must be for some principle or for a benefit to the public whose servants we are. There is one sovereign remedy for all personal quarrels that anybody may try to get you into—that is to ignore them and go on with your work. If you will only have pleasure in this and let it fill your days, you will have no time to contend, and your neighbors will soon discover this and be made better by it.

Another ideal, and the most sacred of them all, is one of wholesome discontent—a discontent that must only end with your latest breath of mentally competent life. You must be dissatisfied with the many unsolved questions in science, problems of the greatest interest, problems that concern the lives of the people. It is an unending work of love and interest to solve them; and the long night of our past ignorance about them must not discourage you. So much new science has come by the labors of our profession within the memory of men still young, that nobody should be discouraged as to the future. Every man must have an



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interest in discovery. If you may not become an investigator you can help hold up the arms of another who is, and so have some part in the cumulative glory. Stirred by this discontent your eyes must look steadily forward for new light—beware of the false light—for the true one will appear and you shall not be surprised, because you have been looking for it all the years.

So shall you grow and learn to your latest day, and you shall escape the calamity of mental fossilization. This deplorable fate of so many men comes of a fixed notion that most of the knowable is known, and that science will remain as it was. But whoso postulates that many things are yet to be discovered, and that some of his most precious theories may one day have to be given up or recast, and that it is a disgrace to stand still—that man will keep his heart warm and his interest close to the moving column. He can never become a mental fossil; and though living into age, he shall die young.

The medical profession must progress and grow in knowledge, and the new knowledge must make for higher usefulness. But we are in danger—and the more volatile of us are in most danger—from this very need. We are liable, if not likely, to be sidetracked in a pur-

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suit of one idea, and to be governed by it, and so lose our sense of proportion; to become seized with a fad and try to square the world to it. The rapid progress of our science and art during the past few years has increased this danger, and we have had plentiful examples of men being dominated by a single thought, and losing all judicial judgment. Some of the more enthusiastic of them have had a new fad each decade for forty years. Hardly one of them has attained to great success in any way, unless the occasional riding into pecuniary fortune, possibly in the saddle of their fads, may be called success.

No professional man has great success merely because he makes money—true success requires also usefulness to his public, loyalty to the truth, the approval of the great body of his associates, and a clear conscience of his own. Thorough sanity and moderation in all our judgments is, therefore, the only safe ideal. There is more need now than ever before for this standard in the medical profession. To “prove all things and hold fast to that which is true” has not ceased to be wisdom. We can be progressive and at the same time be sensible.

We can be moderate and judicial, refuse to be stampeded either for or against a new doc-

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trine, and yet put every new truth to its best use. We have no warrant, simply because we have discovered a new fact, to throw our hats into the air and forget that this fact has a vital nexus with a hundred old truths that cannot be abandoned, and we will show our wisdom by searching for that relation. If salvation ever comes to us it must be through all the truth, not a mere fragment of it. And a due sense of proportion—otherwise common sense—as an unswerving and insistent ideal is, in a workaday life, the best guide for a safe journey.



## A Domestic Clearing House



## A Domestic Clearing House

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There is a good side to the habit of mind—one of the most common of all habits—which holds those things to be best that have had the sanction of centuries of usage. We do not lightly change our ways of life in the more vital things, although we *do* change, and sometimes change annually in the unvital things, and perhaps we progress. The human mind is not averse to looking at things in new ways, as we know by abundant examples in the past. But we are in danger of trying to make progress in defiance of the laws of nature; and, when we do that, we knock our heads against various obstacles. We sometimes try to walk on the air or on the water, and deny that there is such a thing as matter; but then we encounter practical difficulties that are troublesome.

All our real progress has been made along

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the lines of demonstrated facts. Every effort which has discredited that standard has, sooner or later, come to grief. The history of the human race is littered with the wreckage of theories and cults that have gone to ruin through forgetfulness of this truth.

When men emerged from barbarism and built houses, they thought themselves fortunate to be thus able to protect their bodies from storm and cold and heat. But it is a discovery of this later day that to vast numbers of people house life is often a grievous misfortune. Countless thousands get sick because they stay in houses too much; and the sick in large numbers recover by practically living out of doors.

Who by any old-fashioned reasoning about things would ever have thought of killing mosquitoes to avoid ague and yellow fever? Or of looking through a human body from a dark box to see a nail in the stomach, or a bullet in the muscles? That such things are both possible and true gives us warrant to seek still other improvements in the conveniences of our lives, and other advantages over the adverse influences of nature in general and the enemies of the human race in particular.

The search for happiness is as old as man and as constant as the sun; albeit the quest is



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often poorly planned for success. To add to our comforts and to minimize our cares is the ambition of everybody. Efforts to enlarge our joys without harm are always commendable. And that a change in the ways of living appears to violate custom and fixed notions is nothing against it, provided it offers a better average of happiness. All reforms have met with more or less opposition on the part of the people, except the reduction of the rate of postage. But reforms should not be attempted carelessly. There are certain conditions that ought to be insisted upon as crucial for each one that is proposed. It must promise to lessen or abolish some evil, some cause of human grief; or it must add to some comfort already possessed; or it must create a new pleasure that is not unwholesome; and withal, it must not do any countervailing injury.

No innovation can be more laudable than one that shall give to our handicapped children a better start in life and more chances for a successful career. A love of childhood belongs to most normal minds. Some people are interested solely in their own children; some are anxious to possess children of their own; they love them because they are their own—and work and fight for them for this reason. Others like children in general by a common

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fondness that is inexplicable, hence instinctive. Others still are fond of them as the men and women of to-morrow—the potentiality of full-fledged citizens of the future. There are others who have no interest whatever in children or childhood ; and a few of these are fond of the lower animals.

People who have no liking for children, or who dislike them, are usually more selfish than other people ; and the devotion of parents to their children is often tainted with a selfish calculation that the children will return to them the love and care later on. The failure of the children to do this is one of the most biting griefs of some parents in their old age. The parental love is not meant to be selfish, but it is selfish all the same. The child's carelessness of his own highest obligations as he grows up, and as his parents grow old, is likewise not intentional, but it is none the less wicked.

It is an open question whether with a large minority of people the joys of parenthood, in the long run, outweigh its griefs and disappointments. The devotion of most children to their parents is one of the most exquisite pictures of human life. Their loyalty and tenderness are alone enough to make us believe in heaven. But the selfish neglect and

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disrespect shown by some people toward parents who have slaved away their lives, and have foregone many comforts for their children, is one of the saddest chapters of human story—and it is a chapter that has abundant illustrations all about us.

So it happens that the relations of children with parents are attended with a mixture of joy and grief. There ought to be much more joy than grief; and any scheme that offers to increase the joys and reduce the griefs is a positive gain. Not only is there unhappiness between parents and children, but this often grows worse rather than better from year to year, and tends to warp the natures of both the parties. A more notable fact is that *because* the parties are parents and children, the warping of the natures of both, especially of the children, is more rapid and more pronounced. This asymmetry is liable to occur even in cases where there is no special nervous friction between them. Take for illustration two nervous and irascible parents. Their children are hereditarily nervous. The irritable natures of the parents accentuate the nervousness of the children, and vice versa. Both parents are slightly abnormal, and in the same direction—the children are from birth usually more abnormal, and in the same way. And the

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parents and children usually rasp each other, consciously or unconsciously, and get each other out of patience often and often. This makes matters worse for both. They are irritated by the presence of each other, by the words and acts, and even by the looks of each other—they are oikiomaniacs, especially the children, who show it more violently than the parents do.

Nature and the canons of society have tried to prevent all this by making it unlikely that couples closely alike by consanguinity, or otherwise, will marry. The effect of this in the children should be to counteract the eccentricity of one parent by an opposite one of the other; but all these efforts frequently fail, and a couple are doomed to see their own identical traits enlarged in their children. These traits are exaggerated in the children, and they grow worse by the daily impact of like traits of their parents.

Why cannot some of this warping and unhappiness be lessened by wise and voluntary changes in the relations of parents and children? Must the misfits of these factors in society continue through years to do harm, simply because it is the fashion and tradition that people must raise their own children, and that most people think it unnatural and wrong

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not to? Parents have no ownership in their children. The children are free and responsible souls, with various moral and legal rights, soon after they are born. Parents usually forget these facts, and assume that, since the children begin life as the most helpless of all beings, they must somehow be the property of their parents till they are of age, or longer.

Misfit parents are sometimes divorced from each other by the courts as an act of pathetic justice. Ought not the children to have in some degree a similar privilege as to parents? Now and then a child is divorced from his family by going to the reform school; but usually this occurs only when his misdemeanors run against the interests of the public outside of his own household. The reasons for his separation from his home, which arise out of the conditions within the family, are often quite as real and melancholy, if less notorious than those which carry him to the reformatory; and in these instances the parents and children are as a rule equally at fault, whether they know it or not. But are they equally responsible? Are not the parents more responsible?

If all the parties could agree to strive unselfishly to improve the race, as well as themselves, the frequent separation of parents and

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children might increase their happiness and be a great advantage in many directions. Numerous examples in the observation of every thoughtful person should make this postulate clear, and I think ought to carry conviction to any reasonable mind.

Here, for instance, are two nervous and very irascible parents. They are fastidious, captious, pragmatical, hypercritical; they flare up at trifles, and are always in more or less trouble. They have certain sensibilities to annoyance; perhaps it is dirt, perhaps some notion peculiar to themselves. But they are people who are potent in moving the world. Their children are likely to have the same bent increased; they are more hyperesthetic and less calm and stable than their parents are, or were at their ages. If a door slams near by they jump as if they were shot; and there are certain ways and words of others that always serve as sparks at which they explode in emotion or temper.

Can anyone doubt that both the parents and children so constituted are made worse by every day's association together? The parents are always nervous and grow more so; and the children sometimes are so nervous as to seem to approach the borderland of actual lunacy. To the abnormal and unwhole-

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some traits which they have transmitted to their children, parents add the exasperating effect of increasing them by their own perpetual display of like qualities.

In another part of the town is a pair of tranquil people who have some tranquil children. They all move along in a comfortable sort of way and trouble themselves little about the trifles of the world or the motion of the waters. They don't appear to love each other overmuch or with a show; and they don't nag each other. A little excitement thrown into their lives might be useful to them—it would open their eyes.

What a blessing if the children from that other and nervous household could be dropped down (and to stay) into this one! How they would grow and develop in a better way! And their irritability would, like any other flame, grow less by lack of fuel to feed it. They would increase in tranquillity day by day. To have them in the family would be positive spice of life for these slow and undemonstrative parents, and they would be proud of the acuteness and the activity of these new children. They would themselves actually prick up their ears in consequence and grow somewhat.

On the other hand, if the slow and dull chil-



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dren could come into the nervous household, they would be entertained and awakened; they would be spurred to activity and new occupations that they would doubtless find at times amusing. The nervous adults of the house would perhaps take a more tranquil pace, and might at least be glad that they had children under their roof whose nerves were not grown on the surface of their bodies, and, like super-sensitive traps, ready to be snapped by a breath of air. In the end, all these people would be helped.

It is perfectly manifest that the children of the two families which I have described ought to be swapped. Of course the same end would be accomplished if the parents could be swapped; but, on economic grounds, that would be less convenient than to swap the children. This arrangement would work great benefit to four sets of persons—two sets of parents and two groups of children. The nervous parents would be soothed by the tranquil children, who would in turn be spurred to greater activity and usefulness. The quiet and slow-going parents, on the other hand, would be stimulated by the nervous children, who in turn would have their hyperesthesia calmed—they would learn better the great truth that tranquillity and imperturbability are the men-



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tal qualities that, in our strenuous civilization, are most of all to be coveted.

Some parents love their children too demonstratively. They not only carry this emotion on the surface of their lives like a flower on their clothes, but they insist on dissecting it, tearing asunder its petals and stamens, not to discover its construction—which they could never understand—but to see if it is growing. They are troubled if their children fail to act similarly; and the children learn to do this usually, or in disgust go to the opposite extreme. This makes for some happiness, but it incurs also a load of sorrow, for with these people happiness comes to depend so much on the finer surface amenities, that it is sure to be jarred more or less by the accidents of daily life. There can be no question as to the wonderful beauty of these amenities. Their absence would be a distinct loss to life and society, but many families carry them too far, and if stolid children could be adopted by them, it would be a gain to the children; and the loving and effervescent children taken into calmer families would bring there a kind of sunshine that their new parents had never dreamed of. Clearly, some swapping here would make for a sum total of more happiness; at the same time the tendency to the

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growth of warped child natures would be lessened.

There are some foibles and sins that are transmitted from parents to their own children that adopted children are less likely to take. Some parents fib to their children, usually unwittingly and carelessly, but the children see through the gauze and learn to manage their parents, usually or often by a counterplay of deception. Parents warn of punishments to come for possible transgressions; then forget or fear or hesitate to inflict the penalty. The children see this sham and grow deceitful; besides, it is more easy for them to learn deceit by reason of their inheritance from their parents—like parent, like child. These parents not only are dishonest with their children, but they are dishonest with their neighbors; and the children are quick to adopt such methods themselves; these eccentricities of parents are liable to be increased in the adult lives of the children, to the harm and loss of society.

Such children would be much profited if they could be adopted into families where the promise of a punishment to come is as impossible as any other sin of the days of barbarism, and where disingenuousness to a neighbor is unknown. Finding the new household to be managed in general on the basis of truth,

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candor, and good fellowship, the deceitful children would soon learn how cheap their methods are, and grow better. Then if the deceitful and barbaric parents could adopt some children out of these better families, the children might work for them a like reformation. The exchange would be rather hard on the candid parents and their own honest children, who would be expected to reform the parents and children of the other families; but a missionary spirit is honorable, especially when it finds its object near at home; and good folks should be ready and willing to sacrifice their own comfort to some degree for the betterment of others. What is our existence for if not to better others as well as ourselves?

I have heard of parents who are averse to having children, and there can be little doubt that some of these would be glad enough to be rid of their children after they have them, provided that were possible without public censure, and with ease to a mental state they call conscience. But the clearing house proposed would insure that such children should be adopted into childless families of kindly people who would take good care of them. There would be kept a standing list of such families who are eager to give their lives and their love for children of their adoption—to

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the great benefit of themselves, of the children, and of society at large.

What objection can there be to an arrangement that would make these three groups of people happier—the children, and the two sets of parents? Why not try in this way to correct some of the multifarious misfits of children and parents? The few instances I have cited are only typical examples; and they show the need of some new and drastic remedy for a very common evil.

I know the stock argument that one can never consent to “give up” or into the hands of another the children of his own flesh and blood; that it is unnatural; that nobody can be so good to a child as its own mother—and so on. But people do give up their children, more or less, when they marry them off. They very much give up their daughters then, and often find they have given up their sons; and they frequently do this without the slightest difficulty, sometimes even with gladness, especially if their own financial burdens are lessened by the transaction.

The wealthy people nearly always give up their children three quarters of the time, and four fifths in substance, to nurses and attendants (the latter often selected with less discretion than they choose their clothesmak-

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ers) ; and they give them up to their own devices with their playmates, sometimes to their good, but often to their harm, a part of nearly every day. Not a few mothers are glad enough to trust their children to nurses, attendants, teachers, and playmates for as many hours a day as possible.

Many times a mother finds herself so nervous from the influence of her children and from the demands of society that she must go away from both of them and rest for days and weeks ; then she certainly leaves her children to the care of others. This argument about not giving up children to other hands evidently needs to be shorn of some sophistry and a good deal of the rhapsody of egoism.

The notion that no woman but the mother of a child can be as good to it as she is is a fallacy ; it even has some of the earmarks of nonsense. The discreet nurse is often better to and better for the child than its own mother ; and the child-loving foster mother is usually a safer guide for the best interests of the child. The mother usually does more things at the selfish behest of the child—things that are harmful to it—than the foster mother does. Besides, the mother is more likely to do foolish things for her child, when moved by the sentimental heresies of motherhood. Thus,

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when the child is sick, she refuses to have a nurse, but insists on sitting up and watching with it for many nights in succession; and then, so overcome by fatigue and drowsiness that she is worse than useless, she perhaps blunders and gives a poison instead of a dose of good medicine. A foster mother is not half so likely to be foolish and spoil in herself the good nurse the child needs; she is more apt to be guided by sense, less likely to be swayed by the frenzy of an unstable conscience. Like the stepmother—and rather less unfairly treated than she—the foster mother never has had a fair judgment at the hands of her critics. There is not a more devoted person in the world. She not only worships her adopted child, but she sometimes worships real motherhood, and the idea of it in the child's mind, as benighted people cling to a fetish. Think of her avidity for a baby to cherish, leading her to actual theft to get one! Then of her guarding for years the secret that she is not the real mother—when invariably the child will love her more if it knows the truth! For the child, as it grows up, must appreciate the truth that tender care and support which is unprompted by consanguinity is a finer thing by reason of this fact.

The foster mother is usually a mother from

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deliberate design, not from accident ; and children once in her possession are, as a rule, cared for cheerfully. She is less disposed to give them over to the care and instruction of servants than natural parents are—that is, she is a little more likely to be normal in the bringing up of her children than are natural mothers. Moreover, under her care the children have relatively more chance for spontaneous development ; she is a trifle more apt to appreciate the fact that after a child is born it usually, through the influences of its immediate environment, evolves itself as to its intellectual and moral life, much more than it is ever “ raised ” by the set rules for its daily conduct.

Almost the sole foolishness of the foster mother is to forget that her spiritual privilege is so much greater than that of the real mother that she ought to be very proud of it—instead of trying the usually impossible task of keeping her child all his life in ignorance of who she is and who he is. When the child finally discovers the truth—as he almost always does, and from alien if not unfriendly lips—his respect for the foster mother invariably falls a little. People cannot actually waste foolishness without stepping down from some of the pedestals on which their admirers have



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placed them. Forgiveness is blessed, but the need of it tends to lessen the love that is left. And this blindness of the foster mother not only does her injury in the end, when the truth comes out, but it robs the child of the great moral benefits that ought to come of the knowledge that his care and nurture have been due to the disinterested love of people not bound by law to keep him.

It may be asked whether children growing up under the care of foster parents can have in after life a feeling toward them as tender and wholesome as they would toward blood parents. Does fosterage lessen the best quality of filiality? I think not. Fosterage may change it a trifle, but the best essence of it comes to a child through a memory of the useful and permanently happifying things that have been done for him. The man recalls best and with most fervor of thankfulness those child benefits that gave him the inside track in his worthy ambitions. He easily forgets the candy and the caresses of his childhood; but those hints and favors that helped him to be a man among men and women, and to lead in his struggle for success, have made him an everlasting debtor to those who have helped him, and he rarely forgets this obligation. His gratitude goes out to the parent, the foster



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parent, or the friend of his youth, about equally for equal help. The parent may easily lose this homage, and the foster parent or friend may gain it, but can anybody say that it is uncommendable or not of the best essence of filiality?



# The True Gospel of Sleep



## The True Gospel of Sleep

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In the popular mind there must be some mistakes about sleep, so variant and dissimilar are the current notions of our need of it, of the effects of it, and of the lack of it. All the theories about sleep cannot be correct; some of them must be wide of the mark.

One man is sure that for health and strength he needs only four or five hours of sleep out of each day of twenty-four hours; he has demonstrated this thesis experimentally, for himself, over and over again; it is his gospel of sleep; and he quote numerous people above childhood who have like views and experiences. Another thinks he must have eight or nine hours and cannot do with less, and, as all men tend to measure others by the yardstick that fits themselves, he is sure to believe that no one should have less than one third of his existence spent in sleep.

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Many physicians freely teach this latter view, and insist that children especially must have an abundance of sleep or be in peril of nervous and mental bankruptcy. We are told, and have long taught, that infants should sleep a large part of the time, especially during their first year, in order to be safe from calamity to their brains. A large measure of sleep is surely useful, as well as convenient, for all babies; yet there are instances of infants and small children who have for many months together slept less than four hours in the twenty-four, and come out of the experience with vigorous minds and bodies.

Great numbers of adults in our modern life of high nervous tension are victims of insomnia, more now than ever before, and the number is apparently increasing rather rapidly in certain communities. Drugs to produce sleep were never in such demand as now; were never used so freely, both as a temporary expedient and as a daily habit; they are sold in vast quantities all over the nervous world, and are used according to the whim of the sleepless, more often without than with the advice of their physicians. Insomnia is therefore a favorite harvest field of the exploiter of "patent" nostrums, for he well knows that, when driven to desperation by sleeplessness, its vic-

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tim is ready to do anything or take anything that promises relief; and if sleep comes as an effect of a drug he is ready to forgive other and perhaps resulting ills, some of which may in the end be worse than the insomnia. And the other ills that come of the habitual use of soporifics are many and grave, and range all the way from trifling inconvenience to severe sickness and death.

Possibly some of the sleeping potions may do good by helping to sleep without inflicting any incidental harm to the system; but the evidence is strong and accumulating that most, if not all, of the soporific drugs do harm in some way, especially the coal-tar products, and all those that produce their effects by obtunding the sensibility of the nervous system. While their use may be justified by an occasional exigency, they are in the main mischievous, because, if for no other reason, they undertake a function and do a thing for the body that good hygiene and a better course of living should as a rule make unnecessary.

The testimony of the sufferers with insomnia certainly seems, on the face of it, to confirm their theory of the seriousness of this affliction, for they find that a night without sleep, even if they are in bed, with their bodies

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resting, more or less unfits them for the duties of the coming day, and that after a good night they are fresh and strong and satisfied. And these data are correct; after a wakeful night these people are unnerved for the day, and after a night of good sleep they are fit and cheerful. Whether their theory is correct, that lack of sleep alone does the mischief, is another question, and there is reason to doubt the theory, and to suspect, if not to know, that the insomnia is only one of the several factors in the problem, one of several co-results of a common and another cause, and not itself the sole cause of all the harm.

It is evident that the victims believe implicitly in the current theory. They easily come to dread a sleepless night; being awake in bed in the dark becomes to them *hades*, veritably; they look forward to such a possibility with nervous apprehension if not horror, which makes them less likely to sleep; indeed, it often prevents sleep completely. In the throes of wakefulness, when they have gone to bed for the purpose of sleeping, they become so annoyed and agitated as to make sleep hard, or impossible, to court; they count up and down long columns of numbers, they say the alphabet, and repeat the multiplication table or their prayers in their efforts to entice slumber,



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but unavailingly. So they lie awake tossing in restlessness and chagrin till morning; and afterwards they look back on the experience with a sense of gloom. No nightmare could be so terrible.

It is not unnatural that they should attribute their bad symptoms to the lack of sleep, for that is the easiest conclusion, but it is only half true if true at all. It is vastly important in this study to keep the horse in front of the cart, for the tendency is strong to reverse them. The true story is that the horrors of insomnia are slightly or only moderately due to want of sleep—very much more due to insomniphobia, with which, in some degree, nearly every such patient permits himself unnecessarily and foolishly to become afflicted. His experience is analogous to that of the victim of consumption who has night sweats. This latter believes, till he is taught otherwise and better, that his bad day is due to the night sweat preceding it. This is a most unscientific inference. Really, the bad day and the sweats are co-results of another and a different influence; they are not cause and effect. When the patient learns this truth, and that the sweat is not harmful in itself, but a possible benefit by the expulsion of poison from his body, he discovers that it is only a trifling inconvenience,

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not a calamity, and he bears it with equanimity if not with actual pleasure.

The victim of insomnia is equally wrong and equally unfortunate in his reasoning about his case. He honestly believes that loss of the sleep which he thinks is his due is fraught with the certainty of great injury; he laments his infirmity and often fears he will become insane, and he may invite insanity by his worry, when, if he could stop his fretting, he would find himself hurt very little, if at all, by it. The very attitude of his mind when he goes to bed tends to keep him awake, for he is in a state of mental expectancy of insomnia, and the longer his slumber is delayed the more demoralized he becomes, the more exalted is his irritation, and the less likely is he to fall asleep. What is worse, he is very unhappy about it, he fumes and profanates his privileges; and this mood tends still more strongly against slumber.

If he can go to bed and sincerely resolve that he does not wish to sleep, but would rather keep awake all night, and perhaps read an unexciting book or otherwise try to drive off slumber; if he can bring his mind genuinely and ingenuously to this mood, which is one of pleasure at being awake—then he will probably soon fall asleep, and so remain the night

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through. The chief thing is the mood of pleasure, or, lacking that, stoical indifference as to whether sleep comes or not; these emotions make the terror impossible, and bring sufficient sleep in nearly every case—not eight hours it may be, but enough; certainly enough to prove that this measure is far safer and wiser than the common resort to soporific drugs.

There is another truth that is even more fundamental than the one just referred to, a truth that is substantially never mentioned by students of this subject. This is that our theory is wrong that we should go to bed and stay there eight or ten hours a day for the chief purpose of sleeping. Sleep, go to sleep; get asleep; sleep is the great restorer; blessed sleep—these are the cries that always ring in our ears, and that have probably in some form rung in the ears of all the recent generations as a guide in life, and as indicating the drift of thought about sleep. But it is a narrow and one-sided view. Of course sleep rests the tired brain, and lets its thinking cortical cells recuperate from the strain of labor that has lowered them; but what of the weal of the tired body whose tissues have been lowered by the work of the day? This need has been almost wholly neglected in our scheme of rea-

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soning, and the poor body has had to get what benefit it may as an incident of the sleep. On the contrary, we should go to bed to rest the tired body and let sleep come as an incident; rest of the body should be the chief aim; if we will go to bed with that purpose the sleep will mostly take care of itself. Man can by his own volition send his body to bed as readily as he can chop his wood, and so his body rests; but sleep comes as a consequence of the conditions of his body and brain; and some of these conditions are fatigue, horizontal posture, quietness, silence, and darkness to shut out disturbing mental impressions and to incline the brain against thinking. Sleep does not come and never can come by an act of the will, as one rises and walks. The brain puts itself to sleep as its physical conditions entice, and quite regardless of the will.

With an active physical life, the body should probably rest horizontal about one third of the time; and it is not necessary that the brain should be unconscious in sleep all this while. Perhaps no one sleeps too much; sleep can hardly injure the brain; but we have had an extreme estimate of the amount of sleep which it is indispensable that a rested body should have. This is a most practical truth; and every insomniac who gets himself down to or

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up to this mental basis begins at once to benefit from it, and he finds that lying awake an hour or two of a night, or before rising in the morning, is not only not harmful, but is not specially unpleasant; darkness ceases to be terrible to him, and he finds he can have good thoughts as well as bad ones, when he is alone with himself in the silence of the night. Then he is surprised to find his terror gone; he ceases to be an insomniaphobic, and becomes a happy philosopher.

But this mental basis is one of the hardest things in all the experiences of life for the distraught poor sleepers to reach. It is hard for them to change their philosophy of sleep and their habits about it. They unconsciously and unwittingly come to regard the act of lying in bed awake in the night as a punishment, if not a sin. They are chagrined if they do not drop off to sleep promptly on going to bed; and if they awaken before daylight they fret till rising time, or they get up before their rest is over because they are awake. Is man so weak and mean an animal that he cannot endure in bed at night the waking presence of himself alone, but must have the constant waking company of his kind or of the light—or perhaps of his dog!

This fuming tendency of the mind is a most

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interesting trait, but a most unfortunate experience. It is quite as likely to reveal itself about a trifle as for the momentous things of life. A man will be extremely annoyed and impatient because you keep him taking a pill three times a day for weeks, although the pill is sugar-coated, is swallowed easily, and produces not a symptom of which he is conscious. If it were a sugar-coated bread pill, and he did not know this, he would grieve about it as freely. And we are all witnesses of countless lamentations of people because of trifling discharges from their throats and noses, of harmless mucus each day. We know and they know that no pain or discomfort comes of it, yet they are in daily terror of the awful consequences they suppose to attend this trifling thing labeled catarrh that harms no one. So we suffer ourselves to be terrified by an hour more of conscious life each day than we guess to be normal—an hour more of ourselves. How foolish we are!

It is hard to unlearn the lessons of a lifetime, especially when they are reinforced by beliefs that are hereditary from a thousand generations of usage, and to see as agreeable some things that have always been held to be disagreeable. The sleep problem illustrates this truth most vividly.

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One of the hardest sides of the problem is the contention that much less than the classical eight hours of daily sleep will do. But there are many facts to prove this thesis. People who lie abed long hours reading, sleep correspondingly little, and they live as long and keep as well as the average. It is notorious that many eminent men of history have slept little, and I think hardly one who can be called an intellectual giant has been accustomed to a large amount of sleep. Nor is it necessary that children, even infants, should have as much sleep as we have supposed. Many years ago my eyes were opened by an experience with a wakeful baby. He slept only about three or four hours a day on an average for a year, as shown by the most accurate records. This wakefulness was due, apparently, to some nervous predisposition. Quieting drugs were tried, but it was soon found that dangerously large doses would be required to increase his sleep materially; and so, fearing the drugs more than the insomnia, his management was confined to good nursing and good nutrition. I fully expected that the child's brain would be permanently harmed by this experience, but nothing of the sort occurred. At the end of a year and a half he was sleeping better, and by the end of his second year he was getting as



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much sleep as the average child of his age, and he was well and vigorous and had a good mind. Then a strange thing happened; he began to sleep more than other children, and by his sixth year, when he entered school, he was sleeping about fourteen hours daily. By his tenth year he apparently had paid back to Nature what had been lost, and was sleeping like other children of his age. He was perfectly well in mind and body, active and mischievous, and was well abreast of his school-mates in his studies. One such case is enough to demolish the theory that a child must, that all children must, sleep a great deal or be ruined.

It is a common experience for a man to put off his bedtime until a late hour because he thinks he cannot sleep till then; or to walk or work so as to tire his body profoundly before going to bed, in order that he shall be sure to sleep; or to get up at an absurdly early hour in the morning, because he has awakened and cannot sleep any longer. In all these ways he is wrong, for in them all he follows the bad principle that we should go to bed chiefly for sleep. We are foolishly unhappy by lying in bed awake, in the dark, and with nothing to do. We are worse than children afraid of ghosts. It is an unreasonable and unreasoning fear,



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and one that any sensible person should have no difficulty in putting aside.

The body ought to be well rested every day, and in the horizontal posture. The erect position that is maintained through nearly all our waking hours makes this indispensable. We are physically handicapped as compared with the fourfooted beasts; we need more rest of body than they, and rest horizontal; and if we get enough rest of body we usually get enough sleep, if we only let ourselves sleep, and do not prevent it by worrying. But we should, as far as possible, seek those physical conditions that encourage sleep while we are resting. That rest of body is more necessary than much sleep, and that insomnia is clearly provoked by an easily prevented mental mood, are not reasons for us to neglect any of the obvious aids to easy slumber. These ought to be studied carefully and used resolutely.

Light keeps some people awake; usually more than need be, because they worry about it and magnify it as an impediment. Most people can have their bed hours in the dark; they can either go to bed early enough to have eight dark hours, or they can darken their rooms. Many are kept awake by noises; often needlessly kept awake by trifling sounds that would be wholly negligible save for their pro-

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pensity to be nagged by them. The irritation grows by indulgence; every time they hear the sounds and regard them as annoying, the horror grows. If the noises are produced by people or by animals, and therefore may be preventable, the hatefulness is usually greater; the sounds of the wind and waves and rain, or even gentle thunder, are less sleep-killing than the coughing or snoring of an innocent neighbor or the distant barking of a dog.

Most persons can overcome much of any morbid sensitiveness to sound that they may have, if they understand these truths and will be sensible. But few will try hard enough and be wise enough for this consummation; and so some remedy for the noises of creation is proper for such people, if a remedy that is not hurtful can be found. The measure resorted to for this purpose must be mostly subjective; the noises themselves can be controlled but little; they must be kept out; the sound waves must be prevented from entering the ears. Cotton stuffed into the ear channels does a little good, but some waves pass through it unless it is packed in so firmly as to cause discomfort, which of course renders the device nugatory. A cloth or other dressing tied over the ears may keep out many noises, but here again the apparatus, in order

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to be efficient, must press so tightly as to do more harm than good. The thing needed is an air-tight, non-vibrating stopper for the ears; one that will not itself make a disagreeable sensation by pressure or otherwise; one that is easily applied by the patient himself; and one that is harmless.

Common paraffin seems to fill these conditions; it is easily used, is harmless and wonderfully efficient. A small mass of the substance is warmed in the mouth, chewed perhaps to soften it the more rapidly, and is then pressed firmly but gently into the ear. It adjusts itself instantly to the ear tube, hardens as it cools, and remains an almost complete bar to the passage of sound waves, without producing a disagreeable sensation, indeed, with so little sensation of any sort that its presence is soon forgotten. It is applied at bedtime and removed by a finger in the morning; or it may be worn during the day, if it comforts the patient, but not all the day, for fear of interfering with the normal drying of the external ear. It may be used in this way for a long time with no harm of any sort, and with the great advantage that it makes the patient nearly, or quite, independent of the unavoidable noises of his environment. This device may render it unnecessary to go to the

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country to sleep in order to escape from the city noises; it may make it less necessary to keep the children still to avoid waking their elders, and it may help the sensitive children to finish their day naps in spite of the noises about them.

Many people sleep poorly for want of sufficient clothing in bed; coldness of the feet is especially apt to keep them awake. A good bed is needful, for it rests the body most, and so helps toward sleep. The remedies for these defects are obvious, but often beyond reach. A spread-out newspaper placed between the blankets has the heat-keeping power of another blanket—and old newspapers are cheap. Overfeeding often produces insomnia, if it does not make the drowsiness of indigestion, causing heavy sleep in the early evening and miserable wakefulness afterwards; hunger sometimes prevents sleep at night—corrected by a cup of bread and milk at bedtime; and overstimulation, especially with coffee and tea, is often fatal to good sleep. These troubles are always correctable. Only a little common sense and a trifle of courage are needful. A loaded large intestine often keeps a sensitive person awake for half the night, when a prompt evacuation would relieve the insomnia for the time completely.

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Foul air to breathe is a frequent cause of wakefulness; for this, the remedy is fresh air in great abundance; and people do not take cold on account of well-ventilated bedrooms, even draughty ones. I know the current thought of the world is against this statement, but the "world" is wrong—and its error is killing thousands of good people each year, some of whom ought to be kept alive, for they might be a benefit to society.

When people are up and about they rarely become sleepy because their brains are tired. They often are sleepy when up and about, but this is mainly due to fatigue of the body, or to some fault of the digestive organs. Sleep comes normally with a normal and unabused body that has been fatigued a little and then put to rest; and it is helped by cessation of active thinking, by darkness, by stillness, by mental tranquillity and a happy spirit. These things are first to be secured if possible; then the sleep comes as a natural consequence and, with hardly an exception, in sufficient amount. The sleep is secondary, not primary; these other things are primary and of surpassing importance.

Nor must we count the hours of our slumber for fear it is not enough; that would break the charm of the influence and spoil the game.

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We may keep a record if we like, and it may be useful for our amusement, and to help determine the exact amount of sleep that, in our social zone, is physiologic for the man, woman, and child of the present century, with their varying orders of enlightenment and manifold grades of work and play. Now no man can tell just what that amount of sleep is; and this question can never be settled by one poor slave of insomnia, or by a thousand of them, and the question can wait. It will profit each of these unfortunates to neglect the race interests for his own, and to put his mind, in the calmest sincerity, to the task of saving himself from his thralldom—and the task need not be hard nor its benefits uncertain.

Some Unconceded Rights of  
Parents and Children





## Some Unconceded Rights of Parents and Children

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It would appear to be a truism that parents and their own children are of all people best fitted to live together and be comforting and helpful to each other. And probably this is the rule; but there are exceptions to it. The rule means the average folk or those near the average, who have no traits or habits that mark them as peculiar or abnormal, and whose bodies are symmetrical and undeformed, for certain deformities of the body go with mental eccentricities almost to a certainty. The exceptions to the rule are the persons who have some mental or bodily deformity; and in the aggregate they are a numerous company. A large proportion of them are among the intellectual, refined, and forceful people, some of whom are a moving influence in human affairs.

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All the geniuses of every sort belong to this latter class, and some of them are strong and capable, but many have little force for useful things. While their peculiarities are, in a few cases, endowments for power in some direction, these folks are all more or less handicapped in the struggles of life, for they lack mental steadiness and equilibrium. They easily tire, often have unstable purposes and judgment. They are a class whose families are usually running out, and giving place to the more strong, tranquil, and evenly balanced people that are constantly coming up from the so-called lower orders of society. Their ranks are perpetually replenished by this better stock; and this, touched in its turn by the blight of our tensive civilization, finally goes to the wall in the same way. Thus, what we wrongly call the lower strata of society become the race-saving ones—they are the better ones. They constantly tend to rise and crowd the others out of existence; so there is a continuous mutation going on among the orders of society, like the geologic compounds of the earth's crust. There is no problem about the plain, tranquil people; they take care of themselves—or the fates of their so-called betters are providing for them. The great puzzle is to know what to do for the exceptional ones,

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the erratic specimens who have noble qualities and acute misfortunes.

These erratic people often irritate each other, even parents and children, and unwittingly accentuate each other's morbidness; without bad motives they often cause a flood of mutual unhappiness. They are all lame in some direction, and for that reason, if for no other, they are entitled to the largest consideration and all the helps that are possible.

Nearly all the aberrations I have indicated are inborn; they could hardly come into existence after birth, yet in many cases they increase during the life of the individual. This increase is produced by the influences of environment, and these are often some unappreciated force or set of forces that continue a harmful pressure for many years. Such forces are often searched for and seldom found; in our blundering we look in the wrong directions for them, and then refuse to recognize them when they are found; many of the most potent of them are unconceded, and so little or nothing is done in a logical way to counteract them.

Some of the defects of these people are physical, and are plainly manifest to others. They show in stature, color, complexion, shape of body, and features, in deformities that may be

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annoying to the eye, like unsymmetrical ears or eyes, in misshapen faces and heads, or in a general lack of bodily vigor. The victims are only too well aware of these peculiarities, and would be free of them if they could; everybody would be symmetrical and beautiful of body if it were in his power to be. But only the lack of general vigor or some slight weakness of a special organ can be helped much by any exercise or education. All the rest of these faults are fixed and will last till death. These we must bear, with such philosophy as we have.

The most important defects after that of lack of vigor are of the mind and nervous system; they are eccentricities of mind, unusual likes and dislikes, egoistic tangents and emotional impulses. These tell in disposition and conduct. They are temperamental, and fix the place of the individual in society; they order his happiness or misery, and measure the peace of those about him; they determine his career in life, his success in business, his reputation among people—even the manner and time of his death.

The most hopeful fact about this class of defects is that, since they are founded in the relative degrees of development, and the relation of the functions of the cerebral cells, they

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are to some slight degree at least, correctible by the effect of education, and the regulation of mental and moral influences, especially when these influences are continued through years of time. A long nose cannot be shortened by any amount of cultivation; but an intense trait of mind may be lessened a little by long enforced disuse, as one that is too weak may grow somewhat by systematic exercise long continued.

It is to the unspeakable interest of these afflicted ones that their faults of mind be first correctly diagnosed; that their causes be found out; and then that the right correctives be put to work and be continued as long as they can be useful. These are two very difficult, often impossible, things to accomplish. Moreover, the task is apt to be a most thankless one; the victim to be helped is likely to object, and to disbelieve in the value of the corrective, and early to grow tired of it, and then to refuse to believe in its good effect when it comes. For this reason, as well as on account of its inherent difficulties, the problem is one that strongly appeals to every spirit of true philanthropy.

The mental traits referred to are numerous and peculiar. They stamp a man as lacking much or little in general mental or nervous

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balance. He is perhaps too nervous or too lethargic, too smart or too dull. His tastes are too acute and critical, or he has little or no critical sense. He has too much or too little candor and frankness. His egoism is large in the direction of covetousness and avarice or of jealousy or envy; or he is so easy-going and careless of himself that he is a nearly useless member of society. If he is too grasping he may become a cheat, a kleptomaniac, or a common thief; if too little so he will lack industry, be lazy and easily imposed upon; will be unable to accumulate property, but will foolishly give it away; he will have an unvigorous nature and may end in the poorhouse.

If his tastes are extremely esthetic he will have intense joy in artistic things and habits, and in people who are artistic according to his standards. But, unless he is a philosopher, he is born to a heritage of lifelong carking at the blemishes and wrongs that are all around him; the dirt and squalor, and the unfitness of things. If his tastes are too dull he will tend to revert toward barbarism; he may not get far in that direction, but his life will be a heedless and lazy one.

All such warpings work for social demoralization, and for weakness of the race as a whole; never for the general balance and the

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common strength. They make for the grief of their victims, and still more for the fatigue of their friends. They are the moral casualties of the march of human progress, and the gloom of their affliction can be lifted only a little by any of our efforts to discover and correct them.

Nature seems always to be trying to prevent such defects, and to keep the human race symmetrical and up to a high standard of power. But the efforts often miscarry, and so the harm comes, and after the children are born with the blight upon them we usually, in our blind faith in the infallibility of nature, refuse or fail to lift a finger to correct them. We hide from our consciousness the very existence of their failings, or, if we discover them, we take them for evidence of the inscrutable workings of the Almighty, and as something that cannot be helped. Some believe it is wicked even to try to correct them.

The abnormalities that I have described usually come to the children by reason of too great likeness in mental traits of the parents or grandparents. And nature tries to prevent this by encouraging marriage between persons of positive if not extreme mental and physical unlikeness. The brunette naturally seeks the blond; the nervous person fancies the calm;

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the big loves the petite; the rude seeks the gentle; strength is tender toward the weak and dependent; and the weak lean upon the strong; while the prejudice against marriages of consanguinity is almost universal. But nature blunders; she is often foiled by propinquity or the lack of it, by diffidence and hesitation on the part of young people, by the often benighted bias of friends and others, and especially by the blindness of the impulsive bundle of emotions called love. Probably not more than one marriage in four is made according to the natural ideal in every particular. The other three are more or less of a compromise which one or both the parties is impelled by various circumstances to make.

The marriage of couples having like traits in excess of the common (and the word trait always implies a mental quality a little beyond the average) tends to greater excess of similar traits in their children, and so down the years interminably. Thus, through a succession of natal faults, to which may be added numerous after influences, we have the neurotic, the intense, the eccentric and the dull—all becoming, or liable to become, worse rather than better through succeeding generations.

These unstable tendencies are deplorable; in the main they are misfortunes pure and sim-



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ple. Only a few of them, and far between, come to be useful in the world; these belong to the few geniuses whose unusual powers in practical ways are of value to mankind; but their contributions are mostly in the direction of amusement, rarely in the realm of work. The valuable discoveries of the geniuses are usually in fields where numerous students have been hunting along the same lines, and searching for results that have been foreseen by many minds. We are apt to call great that man out of many who first happens to find the sought-for thing. But his superiority to the other workers in his field is usually the accident of getting into print a day earlier than the rest.

For the weal of the individual as well as of society, mental balance is to be sought; poise is above all else to be prayed for; a sane sense of proportion is the goal. The child who is born with an aberrant tendency has a natural right to every influence that can help him correct it. Beyond his right to the four prime necessities of physical existence (food, shelter, clothes, and warmth), he has no greater claim on the world than this. He demands, all enlightened people demand, a fifth favor in life made up of education, entertainment, and pleasure; and his right is to have this fifth

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boon so ordered that it shall increase his weak powers and repress his excessive and abnormal ones. It is the duty of everyone responsible for him, as it is his own duty, to aid in this consummation.

It is a safe postulate that the mentally warped child (not the mental defect as we understand imbecility, which is not inherited, but the result of a physical accident) has one or two similarly warped parents or grandparents, or those who showed similar tendencies at his age. That is the reason of his warping; his and their aberrations are of the same general character.

It is equally axiomatic that the peculiarity that has descended to the child is usually increased by living with people having the same peculiarity, whether they be parents or other persons. This is especially true of nervous, erratic, and highly sensitive children and parents. The quality already too highly wrought grows worse by association with people of its kind. It is logical to suppose that, living with people of opposite tendencies, the excessive traits would decrease to some degree; certainly they would be less likely to grow, and this is the way it works in actual practice. A phlegmatic child may be helped to a normal basis by alert and nervous associates, but a

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nervous child never. An egoistic and fiction-building child will be helped by playmates who are simple in their ways and literal in the truth telling—seldom by one of his own kind.

Parents with like traits are made worse and often tired out by the nervous and wearing ways of their children. The same excessive qualities grow more acute and rasping in each, the longer they live together. Of the two, the nervous and emotional parents are hurt most, for they have their normal solicitude for the children added to the nagging they endure from them. The children, because of their inherited emotionalism, often take advantage of the parents, and become selfish and unappreciative, and demand all manner of attention and favors, which they often get, and in the getting become more abnormal.

By an apparent paradox it happens that when the parent does much for the child the latter grows dependent and selfish, and comes to demand more and more; whereas, if the parent is selfish and demands much of the child, the latter often learns to give much, and grows unselfish, loving, and thoughtful—the divinest nature of all the race. This is a strange comment on our ideals of domestic life; and it is no paradox, but just what we

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might expect to occur in a large proportion of cases.

Erratic parents and children are usually mental and moral misfits. They are poorly prepared to help each other, and amazingly endowed to do each other harm. The harm to the children is almost endless, for it may go down to other generations; the injury to the parents—beyond the harm it works on their own children—may end with their own lives. Such children and parents ought not to be together much, they ought to live apart, at least during the developing time of the children's lives, and any power that can bring this about, whether it be an ordered purpose or any of the accidents of fate, is a boon to both parties. Even death itself may come to save from ruin the surviving party; for a life dragged out as a nervous wreck, or lived as a discredit to itself, is worse than death.

The erratic children who have erratic parents ought to be put into families free from influences that can increase their bad habits; the nervous children into tranquil families, and vice versa, so that the parents as well as the children may be helped. By this plan the errors of inheritance would be in part corrected; the overgrown disagreeable qualities would be repressed, or, from disuse, would

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escape excessive growth; and the dormant, the dwarfed, and undeveloped ones might grow and be useful in the world's business. The small children usually do better in families, but the older ones are well enough off in any good boarding school. A long visit away from home and among friends or relatives who will not be foolishly indulgent often starts a good tendency of mind and soul that lasts through life.

Tired-out parents with prostrate nervous powers often find it needful to send their boys and girls away to boarding schools to get rid of the care and worry of them. It is the salvation of many parents, who otherwise might be nervously ruined. It helps many mothers to recover from neurasthenia, and it is usually a benefit to the children; for such a mother has ceased to be valuable to her child, and daily grows worse by trying to care for it. It is a nervous child's moral right, as it ought to be his legal right, to live among tranquil, sanely tranquil, people. The nervous and overwrought children are benefited by going away from their overwrought parents. Living together they nag and irritate each other and both grow worse. The personal influences which the children find in the new environment rub against them in a fresh and usually

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an agreeable fashion and so soothe their irritation. It benefits them also to be among strangers, where they often rise to the best aspirations and conduct that they are capable of; they start there a new life guided by motives that to many may be wholly novel; they become more tranquil and self-controlled, less cantankerous, more considerate of the feelings and interests of others, less selfish. The new life is an inspiration to them; new ideals spring up, and better emotions come to be the guiding force within them.

Nervous and erratic people of all ages, when living together, tend toward oikiomania. They are irritated by the presence of their own people, and annoyed by each other's ways and habits and talk—that is what oikiomania means. This tendency is greater if the family is small and the members must pay much attention to each other; that is, if the personal factors in the family are few. Strangers and people outside their own households have a personal effect to counteract this tendency, and living with them may cure it entirely. This is a well-known truth, and it explains much of the benefit that comes to these handicapped children when they go away from home to school or to live in other families. It is an argument in favor of a cosmopolitan life

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begun early in the child's career. The unfortunate child has a moral right to be placed in an environment that will put at rest, as far as is possible, his vicious tendency and his peculiar irritability, as well as in one that will stimulate those needful qualities of mind that are sluggish and poorly developed. And this is always, to some extent at least, a new environment; but it is not one that means consent to laziness or shirking of duties or the humoring of unworthy ambitions or whims.

While children have the natural right to grow up under conditions that will contribute to their most symmetrical development, even if it is away from their natural protectors, so parents have certain natural rights as to their children, and one of these is the right not to be crazed by them. If they feed, clothe, warm, shelter, protect, and educate their children, that is enough, unless more can be done with mutual benefit. To give also their own peace of mind and even sanity is too large a gift, and it is not required. It is especially not called for, since, when the parent is distracted by the child, the latter is sure to be temperamentally poisoned and more likely ruined by the parent's condition. What protects the parent benefits the child even more.

A parent has no right to show his low ideals,



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if he has such, to his child. And children usually find out what sort of purposes their parents have, even if they try to hide them. It is a rare man who can always hide his base purposes from his child; he is sure to forget some day and blunder into a revelation that the child will see through in an instant. I once saw a man step up to the box office of a show with his son and ask what a ticket would cost for a nine-year-old boy. "Ten years, papa," said the boy in a low tone. And when his father did not correct it he shouted with evident conscience: "Ten years, papa!" The father was trying to get a cheaper ticket by means of a cheap deception, and evidently had not posted the boy. The latter thought his father had made a mistake—later he must have divined, to his own degradation of soul, that it was a very small cheat. Few child memories can be more precious to a man than those of the high ideals and frank honesty of his parents.

The contentions of this paper would be sure, some of them, to meet with doubt and denial from most of the inmates of tranquil and unperturbed households; for most good people believe laudably in the home life for children, as I do; and they usually think it impossible (as I do not) that such a life, ani-



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mated by the good intentions of all concerned, can ever work badly for children or parents. They are ready to demand that children of susceptible ages shall be taken away from intemperate, cruel, and immoral parents. Some would even take them away from irreligious ones. But that well-meaning children may be taken away from parents of the highest order of good morals and the most superb parental devotion—and with benefit to both—seems so absurd to them that they find it difficult to treat the proposition seriously. Yet, if they will look about them with their eyes wide open, and if they will study the personal history of their own times a little, they will find hundreds of cases where, on one pretext or another, this very thing has been done. The reason given in a particular case may be the invalidism of the mother, or some theory of the father, or the irritation from contact with other children; or the boy or girl has begged to go away to school or to go off on a visit, and has been gratified; or the boy has run away from home and after roaming awhile has come back, and then been sent away from home or to work—or, what is often the case, the nervous skeleton in the family has been kept hidden from all but intimates of the household, and some other and factitious ex-

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cuse has been given for the child's going away into new influences.

Every such instance is an argument in favor of the claims here made, as it is a plea for a frank study of this whole subject without blinking the facts. The trouble with the objectors is that they unconsciously feel bound to make the facts harmonize with their theories, which is wrong. Theories, to be good, must grow out of the facts, and there can be no more impropriety in studying this subject scientifically than there is in thus dealing with indigestion or headache. The wrong comes if our study is disloyal to the best interests of child or parent or the community as a whole; and loyalty to child and parent can never be disloyalty to society.

Enlightened communities have had to come to several new notions in the care of the mentally unfortunate; they will come to the ground here contended for, or something akin to it, after they get over the shock of its apparent absurdity. (They now often act upon it, but refuse to confess that they do.) The change will probably come slowly—but it will come, as sure as fate, or we shall outgrow the necessity for it. And the necessity for it lies in our highly wrought and extremely artificial lives. For a full century in this country our

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lives have been growing more artificial and involved rather than less so, with only occasional evidences of a tendency to return to more normal and simple ways.

Among the most hopeful recent symptoms in this direction are the fashion of athletics among the youth of the land during the last two decades, and the later and growing cult for outdoor life and more house ventilation. These influences tend toward physical vigor and the worship of it, and so are helpful in a high degree.

There was a time when it was thought to be a cruelty to the insane to take them away from their homes and friends. Now every informed person knows the absurdity of that idea. The insane of every degree are always benefited by life among strangers. There is substantially no exception to this rule. In former times the families of these unfortunates, usually with the best intentions, treated them in the way that harmed them most. There probably is not in all the history of mankind a more pathetic example than this, of personal devotion doing injury to the object of its care. A near approach to it, however, is our mistreatment of some of the most deserving of our children.

Mentally aberrant children and parents,

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leagues this side of true insanity as it is understood, but peculiar, erratic, and often intense and nervously prostrate, are subject to the same laws of cause and cure as the really insane are. And they stand as much in need of an enlightened love that will do the best things for them, even if at first blush they seem to be unnatural things.

The claim of parents that they cannot spare their children, that it is the parent's place to take care of his children and keep them, is good enough for the normal, wholesome people who are unharmed by too much civilization, or by generations of intense competition. It is a very bad claim for the warped, abnormal people who are victims of our artificial and intense ways of living and working.

For a parent to say that he cannot spare his child out of his sight, even for the child's good, is to plead guilty to a love that is almost purely selfish; and that is a terrible confession to make. Some of the very people who make this plaint see their children but a small portion of the time; most of their waking hours the children spend in school, with other children, and in the care of nurses and tutors, often to their considerable benefit; rarely to their harm. A father or mother with a strong tendency to parental indulgence, or with

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marked irritability, is less safe as a child's care-taker than the good teacher or nurse. The teacher and the nurse are more likely to be discreetly kind and helpful. And it is the natural right of every child to have from its care-takers that order of kindness that is discreet and truly helpful; for that is the sort that works for its lifelong, possibly its eternity-long, benefit, even if it violates some selfish theories and causes some evanescent heart-aches. The best friend of the child is that one who will most help him to a normal and fine development of himself, and to a wholesome and symmetrical career in life. And that friend most deserves his thanks, whether it be his father, his mother, or his neighbor.



The Trained Nurse and the  
Larger Life





# The Trained Nurse and the Larger Life

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## *A Graduation Address*

In making a formal address on an occasion like this, there is something of a temptation to indulge in the common platitudes; to glorify the nurse's calling; to enlarge on the fact that this is a great epoch in the lives of the graduates; to romance a little on the very proper theory that they are destined, in the practice of their profession, to bring joy into the lives of unnumbered sick folks and through them into numberless other lives; that they have a true missionary work before them, and that they are, by their character and demeanor, sure to uphold the standard of their guild and to bring honor to their alma mater. The list of beautiful and sweet things of this kind that might be said, and said with the utmost propriety, could be much prolonged.

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They are pleasant things to say and to hear, and they might be said to-night ungrudgingly and with perfect truth.

But these are the superficial and more obvious things to say; they voice the first impressions of a graduation-day ceremonial, and they are always proper and in good form. Moreover, they are easy things to say. A deeper and more philosophic view, however, prompts a lot of questions, and sees other and maybe larger meanings.

Notwithstanding recent history, this kind of an occasion is relatively novel; twenty-five years ago it would have been almost unique; fifty years ago it would have been impossible. It marks the development of a new order of things for women and men, as well as society in general; a step in a real social emancipation of our kind. Such an event as this would have startled our grandmothers. They were debarred from all schools of higher education; and there were no schools of any professional equipment for them; they were well fettered to tradition. The idea that in the stress of sickness and accident people should be nursed as well as operated upon and prescribed for by trained experts, was in their day only just beginning to be discussed. Now it seems the most natural thing in the world, and we

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wonder it was not discovered before. It has lowered the death rate of cities, and it is one of the few epoch-making improvements in the struggle against death and suffering that were initiated in the nineteenth century. The public has come slowly to realize the value of trained nurses, and now insists on having them. Such innovations develop in a quarter of a century that we are apt to forget what things are wholly modern and what old.

And the nurses improve. As a profession they have taken on dignity. They are, to begin with, a selected company. From the day a girl first inclines to be a trained nurse she becomes the subject of a process of pruning and elimination. She has less than fifty per cent of certainty to be admitted to a first-class school; and once admitted she has a large percentage of certainty to drop out before her graduation. If she is graduated she may fail in the most delicate art extant—one that no training school can teach her completely—the art of adapting herself to the public and to the units of society, for her and their good. Truly, the graduate trained nurse has reason to be proud, especially if her degree comes from a school of exacting requirements.

Who would have thought twenty years ago that a school for the education of women to

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nurse the sick could ever become a department of a university? Yet this wonder is foreshadowed by developing events now going on, and is likely some day to be realized.

Some training schools now require a high-school certificate for admission to their classes, and they put a premium on previous college work. It has befallen that at least some of the sick need, in their nurses, culture as well as neatness and refinement; and that elevating companionship and power to instruct and entertain in a fine way, are often a potent force for recovery, when brought to the bedside by a fine woman not of the patient's own family. Then it is elevating to a patient to have a nurse who is his mental and moral superior, without assuming to be. He cannot belittle her, and she may and often does elevate him.

These high-standard training schools have made another discovery, namely, that a good preliminary education creates for a girl a poise and woman's self-control (and therefore safety as a pupil in training) at least three years earlier in life than these qualities could be sure to come solely by the march of time. It is usually absurd to keep an academic graduate in moral quarantine for a score of moons, meditating on her well-earned diploma, till her twenty-three years have caught up with her

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attainments, before she can enter a training school of the right sort. The age condition of entrance to the older schools is probably justifiable, considering the grade of pupils which their low educational conditions are liable to bring them, for at all costs there must be some maturity of viewpoint and personal reliability in every pupil, and twenty-three will usually bring these. But real education hastens them, crowds them into the earlier years, and develops maturity. It helps to wisdom, if it does not create it.

There is another phase of this subject that is of surpassing interest. The training schools are both a cause and an evidence of certain great changes in the estimate of all classes of people, as to the place of the true woman in society, and as to what the true woman really is. These shiftings affect women more than men, but only a little more, for the new masculine estimate of women constitutes nearly, if not quite, half of the movement. And the movement has been a steady, slow, pervading increase in the opportunities to women to do things, and in the belief of the world in their larger rights and powers to do things.

The trained nurses are an evidence of the change, for without some amelioration of the

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former severe popular standards the nurses never could have entered to the degree they have into the good opinion and the service of the public. And no one who has watched their successful work and the maintenance of their position—sometimes in the face of grave obstacles—can doubt that they have also helped to produce the change.

Time was, in this country, and not so very long ago, when woman was vastly more restricted in her social and legal rights and in her activities than she is now. This is familiar, almost contemporaneous, history. Then she was under the constant protection of the male members of her family. She was chaperoned, hidden, metaphorically veiled, and protected—she was unable to protect herself. Her fields of activity were few, and in these she was expected to be active, especially if they were in the sphere of hard work. But sometimes, then as now, her sphere was to be idle and ornamental, and she was relatively ignorant of the essential facts of the commoner knowledge of the world. Any attempt to enlarge her scope was a suggestion of some defection in her character. Even to try to become greatly educated was mannish—flagrantly so, if she would fill her head with the facts of the world, like animal physiology and

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pathology. By the previous standards women must be ignorant, like the slaves of old, with the difference that the women must be chaperoned. A woman was held not to need much education, and much education was thought to lessen her charms. And what education soever she had must be as ethereal and ornamental as possible. Less than twenty years ago a course in domestic science was introduced into the curriculum of an academy for girls in New England, and was condemned as a sacrilege by numerous critics, not a few of whom were educators themselves. They said it would degrade and belittle the noble thing called woman's education.

Some of these old prejudices still linger even with us, and promise to linger long. In our marriage ceremonies, for example, the bride is often "given away," a relic of the time when she was given away indeed, with or without her consent, as is still the case in the Orient.

Innocency was of old the highest attribute of excellence of woman, especially of a young woman—as it must continue to be forever. But the old doctrine made it synonymous with ignorance, and to that this latter-day awakening demurs, and says that to be innocent of wrong is not necessarily to be kept in ignor-

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ance of any truth of nature—but that the truths of the universe help rather than hinder in that kind of rectitude that constitutes a real virtue and a character worth having.

Even now, after we have conceded more responsibility as well as liberty to woman, we often pretend to ourselves that she is still ignorant, as though that might in some way make us more sure of her immaculateness. Many of our customs still testify to this deception, and we cling to certain of them with great tenacity, and in utter disregard of their relative usefulness. If it is proposed that a social restriction or custom of women shall be made less severe, the more timid of our monitors of ethics are liable to hold up their hands in horror and declare that the foundations of social order are in peril.

An absurd incident in point occurred in rural New England during the early decades of the last century. It was given me by my mother, of sacred memory, and occurred in her own girlhood observation. A woman in her town adopted a new fashion, then just being heard of as coming into vogue in the cities, and was at once pounced upon by most of the neighboring women for having done something which they thought was out of character. She was scorned as much as one



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of these trained nurses would be should she walk a public street in daylight smoking a cigar. It was my grandmother who, in her independent sense of justice, and to show her contempt for the ungenerous criticism, proceeded straightway to adopt the fashion herself.

What was the fashion? It was proper by every criterion save that of its novelty, and it was in the highest sense hygienic and comfortable. We can smile at the mixture of conservatism and prudery with which the neighbors felt outraged, and declare that such foolish judgments shall never enter into our estimate of the conduct of others; but it was unavoidable to them, and we are not wholly free from danger of similar blunders. The fashion that shocked those prim dames was the wearing of drawers by women. This garment, it seems, had never been worn before by any woman of that section of the country, and the innovation was a shock. In a year or two the fashion had very properly spread to nearly every household in the community. The women came to their senses.

This episode shows in a grotesque way how foolish the human genus can be; how it may act without really thinking. This first innovating woman was taunted with not only wear-

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ing the garments of men, but with having designs on the vocations and prerogatives of men as well, and with being immodest. And I should like to be sure that no person in this audience is this moment censuring me for bad taste in having related this incident. I wish I knew that all of us had put away most of our prudery.

The trained nurse, like the college woman graduate, has helped to a public avowal that women may acquire any and all knowledge, and indulge in numerous physical and social activities, and not be coarsened by them. There is a wholesome and a growing class of the better people who refuse to see in waspish waists, untanned faces, mental insipidity, and general uselessness, the marks of the admirable in womanhood. They see the admirable rather in outdoor color, good muscles, capacity to do things, knowledge and courage to inquire, a sane independence, self-respect and good fellowship. These are coming to be reckoned among the marks of character and worth; and the career of the trained nurse has helped to cultivate the better public opinion. With her, to be sensible has come to be fashionable; the people have learned to regard her as incapable of the commoner forms of feminine nonsense. Fancy, if you can, a graduate

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of a first-class training school or of a university wearing a tight corset or foolish shoes or gloves, or powdering away the rich tan color of her face; or simpering.

I think this very reputation for wholesomeness is one of the incentives that cause many young women to enter training schools. Who, in selecting a course of education, would not be glad to find that one which would take him for life into a company respected for its vocation, and honored in the community? We join secret orders and strive to get into coveted social sets for similar reasons.

No student of sociology can doubt that the changes here referred to have benefited the community as a whole. They are especially of value to men by enhancing the man's estimate of the true woman, and enlarging his belief in her capacity and powers; and these changes have come about in no small degree because men have been cared for by trained nurses. The man as a patient may have been rather startled at first at the idea of a young nurse taking charge of him and administering to his every want for restoration to health. But the experience has usually ended by his having a higher opinion of the worth of the real woman. This influence has been a useful leaven that has worked power-

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fully; and no one can know of the value of this force so well as a physician who is fortunate enough to have seen the old *régime* changed to the new, and to have practiced under both. Having had that experience, such an one knows the facts, for the facts are patent to all the seniors in the profession with a general metropolitan practice.

Another influence for the betterment of the standing of the graduate nurse, and through her of womankind everywhere, is the admirable character which, with hardly an exception, these nurses have maintained. I venture to say that the graduates of no college for women have a record for probity, efficiency, kindness, and general woman's character superior to that of the graduates of the high-class training schools for nurses in this country. These graduates have demonstrated, what even women critics themselves do not doubt, that a young woman may be trusted to her own chaperonage without a breath of suspicion from anybody. And that is an achievement that marks an epoch.

To what is this consummation probably due? Undoubtedly in large measure to the rigid selection of the personnel of the student body of the training schools. If superior women are selected for training, superior graduates may

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be expected; but you cannot, in any three or four years of training, make a refined lady out of a girl who is devoid of some essential refinement in her nature. These are axioms, but wholesome to be repeated now and then.

It is, however, positive that a large part of the peculiar superiority of the graduates is due to the very nature of their drill and work. Think of what the work is, and of its spiritual influence. From the beginning to the end of her course the pupil must have the weal, for comfort and health and even life, of others as her constant care and duty. Her service is essentially one of unselfishness, and she has little time or encouragement for trifling aims. She knows that the eyes of the public, the doctors, her teachers, her fellows, and the patients are upon her. The strain upon her is so severe that at first it is often extremely trying to the health of the pupil, more so than has been witnessed in any other sort of school for women in the history of the world—sometimes it destroys her health completely; but if she does not break, she rises high in power and efficiency as her training goes on. The patients may look to her for strength and comfort—they sometimes lean on her in sorrow, and this is an influence that usually makes even crude human nature grow in grace.

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Then, the nurse in the absence of the doctor is solely responsible for the patient, and in some measure she shares his responsibility also, and sometimes her part of it is appalling. She shares with the physician the duty to hold the interests and secrets of the patients as inviolable. A mistake at her hands is not a simple classroom blunder—it may cause a death. If she can bear all this responsibility, the thing happens that comes in the experience of most human beings under similar strain: she stands erect and grows in poise and moral stature; temptations to littleness and meanness grow fewer, and her vision of the real worth of human character grows broader and more accurate. She learns what is the dross of human nature, to be rejected and forgotten as soon as possible, and what the virtues to tie to and be encouraged by. And her appreciation of childhood and flowers and music and all cleanliness enlarges rather than lessens; her judgments grow more temperate and sane—and so she makes a career worth living for and worth dying for. And she often finally dies in the belief that she has been a poor forgotten cog in a great wheel, whose parts are easily replaced, instead of what she truly is, a potent influence toward the betterment of women and men the world over.

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The graduates here present are about to enter a new profession, that has been born out of a new and better dispensation, and has grown to honor within the memory of most of them. It is no small achievement to have done this. If the event is not sufficiently novel to be surprising, it is ground for congratulation that they stand where they do to-day as a result of work and trial and struggle and perhaps grief—and after severe natural and factitious selection. If anyone thinks that the struggle was not hard enough and the selection not sufficiently severe, let him understand that probably their successors will find these progressively more terrible. This is the first harvest of these graduates—the second will be their professional success, if that shall ever come to pass.

The greater fact is that they to-day enter a company of women who have been educated in a new kind of knowledge, and a new art, which is of the greatest usefulness for any woman in any work or walk of life. It will be enormously valuable to every one of them, even should she never do a day's work of nursing outside of her own home. Besides, it gives them the ability to look down, little or much, on most of other womankind. Vanity and conceit over this fact would be unbe-

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coming anyway, and such an ignoble emotion will be smothered when they reflect, as they must, that, whether they pursue the profession or not, they have a large responsibility which they can never evade so long as they live, to maintain that reputation of their guild which their predecessors have already placed high, to the end that woman may have larger liberties and opportunities, and may earn more honor, with no harm but always benefit to the social life of the race.

Nor are good nursing and good conduct enough for this duty that is upon them. They are a living proclamation that women, especially this stamp of women, shall also know somewhat. And knowledge accumulates and changes with time. They cannot and must not stop in their intellectual growth. They must read, observe, and think, and increase in wisdom as knowledge advances.













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